FEBRUARY 1952

COMMENTARY

What to Do About "Dangerous" Textbooks — EDWARD N. SAVETH

The Germans Stumble Along the Road Back

In the Backwash of the Great Crime — NORBERT MUHLEN

Behind Reawakened German Nationalism — HERBERT LÜTHY

When Americans Emigrate to Israel — HAL LEHRMAN

Metathalamium—A Poem — HOWARD O. SACKLER

Just How Bad Is Congress? — ROBERT BENDINER

The Passing of the Batlan — THEODOR H. GASTER

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Conquistador—A Story — PRUDENCIO DE PEREDA

From the American Scene—

Heritage — SHLOMO KATZ

Cedars of Lebanon—

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On the Horizon—

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The Study of Man—

Why Jews Stay Sober — NATHAN GLAZER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Saul Bellow — Robert Weltsch — Paolo Milano

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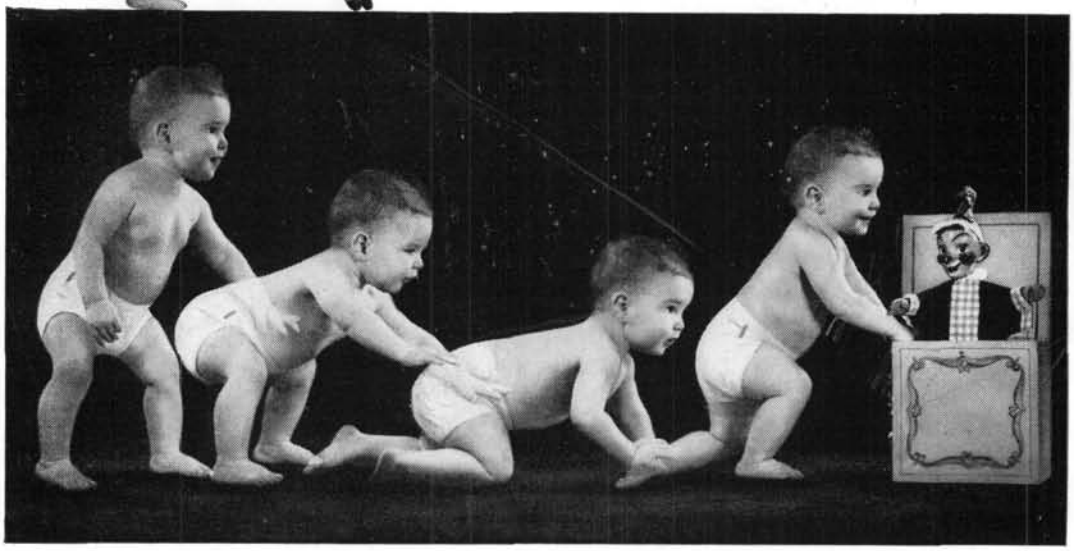

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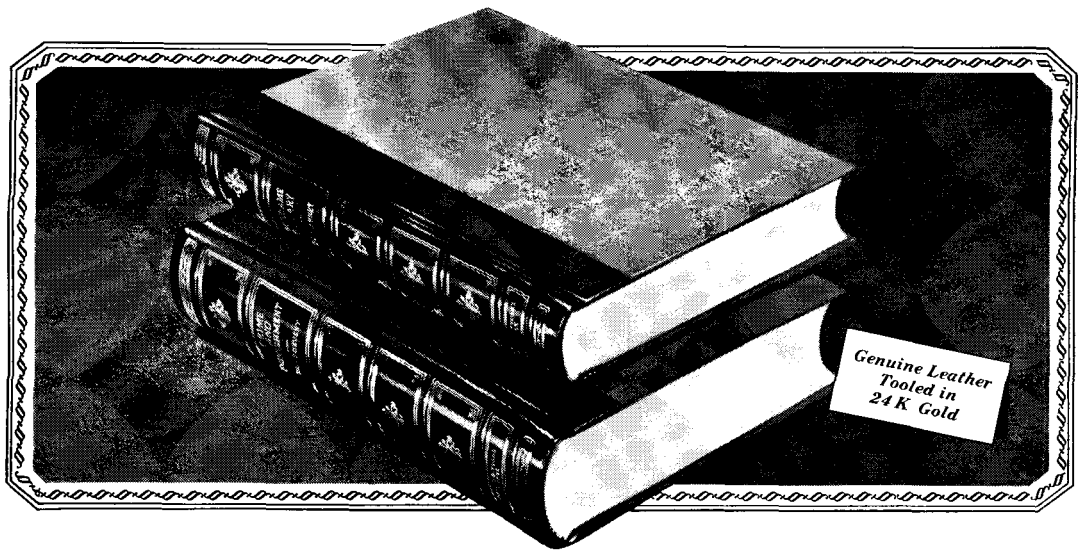

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

George Orwell: A Figure of Virtue *Lionel Trilling*

The character and thought of a writer whose commitment to truth makes him central to the moral dilemma of our times.

The Containment of Mr. Kennan *Sidney Hertzberg*

Thoughtful Americans have been so pleased at the appointment of an Ambassador to Russia who has not only read a few books but has also written one, that they have given little time to considering what George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* actually recommends. For all Mr. Kennan's "realism," Sidney Hertzberg contends, he never quite gets down to offering any specific grounds for his hope that Uncle Joe can be harnessed into a trustworthy "balance of power" with Uncle Sam, or that, once harnessed, he could be expected to go for long without kicking over the traces.

The Chain Reaction That Began in Miami *Charles Abrams*

What is behind the outrages that started with assorted acts of vandalism and violence, then spread to include the dynamiting of Miami synagogues, an attack on a Catholic church, and the horrible murder of the Negro leader Harry Moore? A first-hand report from Miami.

"Whad'dye Read?" in Israel *Ernest Stock*

Israel is a small country with many headaches and with even more newspapers in which to mull over them. Some of these papers take after European models, some after American; others are incontrovertibly *sui generis*. Mr. Stock reports on the entire amazing spectrum.

Golden Years *Sylvia Rothchild*

A poignant story of an old man, his friends, and his wife, by a new short-story writer, who contributed "The Mothers" to our October issue.

The Two-Faced American *Robert Warshow*

Two current films—Stanley Kramer's production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Samuel Goldwyn's *I Want You*—are seen as epitomizing contrasting aspects of American self-consciousness.

Britain's Jewish Intellectuals *Barnet Litvinoff*

Some issues back, Stephen Spender reported in the pages of this magazine on the current position of the British intellectual on John Bull's shrunken island. Here, Barnet Litvinoff analyzes some of the special problems that the Jewish intellectual faces in a new England with its old-new Jewish community.

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COMMENTARY

WHAT TO DO ABOUT "DANGEROUS" TEXTBOOKS

The Pitfalls of Pressure Tactics

EDWARD N. SAVETH

ONE evening last June, a Mrs. Julius Y. Talmadge, at a meeting of the Georgia State Board of Education, denounced Frank Magruder's *American Government* as unfit for use as a social studies textbook, because it "advocates strengthening the United Nations Charter." Actually, Mrs. Talmadge's outburst was superfluous, for the fate of the Magruder book had been sealed a few months before when the Board had decided that the book was likely to subvert young Georgians, despite an editorial plea in the *Atlanta Constitution* that "Governor Talmadge was taught from the book, as were most of the men and women in public life in Georgia, and we defy the Board to prove it has made subversives, socialists, or radicals of them." The plea was to no avail. The meeting of the Board which Mrs. Talmadge addressed ordered the 30,000 copies of Magruder in use in the Georgia schools to be called in and sold—out of the state, of course.

Georgia is not the only place where textbooks have been undergoing critical scrutiny by eyes that once happily had forsworn them; and Magruder's text is not the only one to have been attacked.* In dozens of communities throughout the United States, according to the American Textbook Publishers Institute, adults have grimly been plodding through children's homework. In Port Washington, Long Island; Englewood, New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; Little Rock,

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WHEN parents pore over their children's textbooks, there is cause for wonder. When parents and others begin to read with a censor's eye—watch out! It is a sign that trouble threatens the free interchange of ideas between teacher and student that has been the basis of education for responsible citizenship in our American society, from Jefferson's day on. Recently, under the spur of clamorous complaints registered by certain "100 per cent American" organizations, a suspicion has been raised in many people's minds that a shockingly large number of textbooks are carriers of "subversion." As a result, some textbooks have been banned altogether, while in various communities—including New York State—official investigations are under way. What basis in fact is there for this agitated concern? If none, why the clamor? If some, what ought to be done about it? It is to such urgent questions that EDWARD N. SAVETH here turns his attention. Mr. Saveth earned his doctorate at Columbia University and at present teaches courses in American historical writing and American intellectual history at the New School for Social Research. He is the author of *American Historians and European Immigrants* (1948).

* The ban on Magruder was "temporarily suspended" late in November by the Georgia Board of Education. It also appointed a special professional textbook committee to review the 1952 edition of Magruder, after authorizing use of the controversial 1951 edition for the current year. It may be safely assumed that Magruder will be news in Georgia for some months to come.

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Arkansas; and Houston, Texas, campaigns have been mounted against certain of the books, and counter-campaigns have been launched in their defense. John W. Finger, president of the Sons of the American Revolution, demanded on May 22 a Congressional investigation of textbooks and teaching materials "which tend to undermine faith in fundamental American economic and political principles. . . ." Harold Rugg's appearance as a speaker at Ohio State University early in August was a signal for renewed assault upon his books by a local section of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. On November 13, the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs adopted a resolution calling on the State Department of Education to investigate teaching and textbooks in public schools "as to the extent, if any, of subversive indoctrination found therein." The women were not to be denied: by December 22, the New York State Board of Regents had moved to appoint a commission to investigate whether there were any school textbooks inducing to subversion.

The textbook publishers cautioned communities at the beginning of the last school term to guard against "whisperings that your child's textbooks are subversive—that they advocate Socialism, Communism, Collectivism, or 'New Dealism.'" Such insinuations, they warned, are harbingers of a broader offensive "which will undermine your confidence in your child's teachers, which will pit neighbor against neighbor and religion against religion."

By now, the struggle over textbooks has climbed from the level of insinuations to that of noisy outcries. Where are people of good will to stand in this fight? Obviously, no one wants to see the fundamental principles of freedom treated contemptuously in our textbooks. But is this really the situation? And if so, how is it to be met?

EFFORTS to ban textbooks, particularly those in the social sciences, are not infrequent on the American scene. They are initiated by persistent pressure groups, the most vocal of which are the watchdogs of 100 per cent Americanism (generally interpreted as demanding unstinting support of laissez-faire economics), certain racial and religious groups, and some business organizations. All these watchdogs are amazingly, if understandably, sensitive to any opinion that the author of a textbook might express, especially to what he might say or fail to say about them. They are, moreover, trigger-quick in demanding direct action, in the form of a ban, against the books they disapprove of. The contemporary onslaught upon the schoolbooks, although not without its unique flavor, is largely in this traditional pattern.

Today's assault upon the books is mounted from both the "right" and the "left"—these terms are hardly adequate descriptions of the two forces, but they will have to serve in lieu of better ones. On the political "right," two relatively recently formed organizations—the National Council for American Education and the Conference of American Small Business Organizations—have taken over the main share in alerting conservative or reactionary opinion to "dangerous" books. Allen A. Zoll, who heads the former, has come up from the ranks of the chauvinist, isolationist, and anti-Semitic agitators of the 1930's and 1940's to emerge as a full-fledged authority on education in 1952. Zoll's old organization, American Patriots, Inc., was included in the December 1947 Attorney General's list of "totalitarian, fascist, Communist, or subversive" organizations. His new outfit, organized to exploit whatever pickings the educational field has to offer, nearly died aborning when Frederick Woltman's article, "Zoll, Hatemonger, Promotes New Racket," appeared in the New York *World-Telegram* on August 25, 1948; the article led to the resignation of General Jonathan Wainwright and Gene Tunney from the organization's governing board. Yet, despite the exposé of Zoll's activities, his organization was still effective enough to contribute substantially to the ouster of the progressive educator Dr. Willard E. Goslin from his post as superintendent of Pasadena's schools. His denunciatory reviews of textbooks which do not

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conform to his own perverted standards of Americanism have been used in attacks upon specific titles in Englewood, New Jersey, and elsewhere.

While Zoll is not to be underestimated, the principal leader in the present campaign against textbooks is Mrs. Lucille Cardin Crain, editor of the *Educational Reviewer*. This quarterly publication, made up almost entirely of reviews of textbooks and teaching materials, is published by the Committee on Education of the Conference of American Small Business Organizations. Mrs. Crain's background is quite different from Zoll's. She was co-author in 1948 of a well-argued pamphlet entitled "Packaged Thinking for Women," which was published by the National Industrial Conference Board to combat the influence of liberal and leftist thinking among clubwomen. Apparently the *Educational Reviewer* is designed to carry this work into the area of teaching materials. Mrs. Crain has a staff of reviewers whose evaluation of textbooks and teaching materials is "biased in favor of personal liberty and economic liberty, which are indivisible, and which are the basis of the American system." The reviews, she is frank in admitting, "measure school and college materials by the criteria of liberty and responsibility, rather than by the currently voiced standards of 'rights and duties' to be parcelled out at the hands of bureaucrats." In the light of these criteria, the great majority of the books reviewed are assailed for "undermining the principles of private enterprise" or indoctrinating toward socialism.

THE effectiveness of Mrs. Crain's *Educational Reviewer* is apparent from what happened to Frank A. Magruder's *American Government*—the most widely used textbook in its field—after an attack upon it in the first issue. *American Government* was charged with being a medium for the spread of statist propaganda and with taking a view of democracy that "leads straight from Rousseau, through Marx, to totalitarianism." The author, in treating of inequality of income, is charged with following the Communist party line. Why? Because, states the *Reviewer*, Magruder habitually refers to poor people as "underprivileged" and "unfortunate." The *Reviewer* then explains that Magruder's errors are less the result of conscious propagandizing than the consequences of his being victimized by his bibliography. "Major reliance is placed on the pamphlet material of the Foreign Policy Association and the Public Affairs Committee, which have been charged again and again with the use of party-line propaganda, and are certainly not fitted for classroom use."

The *Reviewer*'s analysis of Magruder was picked up by radio commentator Fulton Lewis Jr. and broadcast to a nationwide audience. Then came the banning of the book in Houston, Texas, and throughout Georgia. In Little Rock, Arkansas, Magruder was dropped as a textbook but managed to hang on as a reference work. In Council Bluffs, Iowa, the superintendent of schools, in anticipation of an attack upon Magruder, had some of his teachers prepare a defense of the book—a step which was also taken in Jackson, Michigan, after a local newspaper had repeated the *Reviewer*'s charges against it. In Washington, D. C., Magruder and other books which the *Reviewer* found objectionable were attacked by a member of the school board. Finding the majority of the Washington board unsympathetic, this member promptly appealed to the Committee of the House of Representatives for the District of Columbia, where he met with a greater degree of understanding.

Certainly this kind of development presents those of us who believe in the democratic process with a serious dilemma, and one which it will not be easy to solve. No one would—or could—deny to Mrs. Crain, Mr. Zoll, or anyone else the right to criticize textbooks; nor would anyone in his senses deny that our textbooks need criticizing. At the same time, however, this "criticism" has about it an air of lynch law that is bound to make us feel very uncomfortable. What textbook could stand up against national broadcasts, editorials, the whole apparatus of modern propaganda that is unleashed on a particular

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book by commentators who may not even have read it, but consider a few quotations sufficient to condemn the entire text? Moreover, there is the question of the nature of this criticism. There is little doubt that the doctrinaire single-mindedness, the "packaged thinking," of the *Reviewer*'s analysis of textbooks breathes more of an authoritarian spirit than a democratic spirit of willingness to see more than one side of a particular problem. Commenting upon the textbook reviews in the *Educational Reviewer*, the Congressional Committee on Lobbying Activities in House Report 3232 said: "The review of textbooks by self-appointed experts, especially when undertaken under the aegis of an organization having a distinct legislative axe to grind, smacks too much of the book-burning orgies of Nuremberg to be accepted by thoughtful Americans without foreboding and alarm. It suggests, too, that the reviewers profoundly distrust the integrity, good faith, and plain common sense of the school boards and teachers of the country." The long-run aim of the *Educational Reviewer*, continued the Committee report, "is nothing less than the establishment of [its own] philosophy as the standard educational orthodoxy in the schools of the nation."

ODDLY enough, there are those who manage to reconcile an all-out attack on Mrs. Crain's methods with the use on their own part of the very same tactics—for different reasons, of course. The kind of censorship that Mr. Zoll and Mrs. Crain, on the political "right," attempt to impose upon textbooks is paralleled on the political "left" by the Teachers Union's report on "Bias and Prejudice in Textbooks in Use in New York City Schools." The Teachers Union is formally against either the banning of books or their censorship, and objected when the Board of Education removed the *Nation* from the libraries of the New York schools. But the Teachers Union's remedy for about twenty-seven books whose attitudes toward immigrant and minority groups in America are found objectionable, boils down to demanding that the Board take more of the same sort of action that it did in the case of the *Nation*. Insisting that it is opposed to censorship, the Teachers Union pamphlet simultaneously demands that books which it considers biased be "scrapped or corrected."

Even as the *Educational Reviewer*'s criticism of Magruder is outrageous in its unfairness, some of the techniques of "content analysis" used in the Teachers Union report are, to put it mildly, not above suspicion. The report cites an American history textbook as stating of the Ku Klux Klan: "Its purposes were patriotic, but its methods cannot be defended." Certainly, the first part of this sentence, as it stands, is ridiculously naive. However, this passage is excerpted out of a 35-line discussion of the Klan in the course of which that organization is soundly condemned. This type of content analysis, by the way, is a weakness not only of the Teachers Union report, but of many other studies which pull out of the textbooks merely such information as is needed to sustain the investigator's point of view.

Indeed, insofar as doctrinaire liberals and "leftists" have had the power, they have moved, at times, against textbooks with a sledge-hammer approach, going so far as to make a public demonstration against an offending paragraph. Consider what happened to the college textbook *The Growth of the American Republic*, by Professors Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard and Henry Steele Commager of Columbia, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (a genuinely liberal organization which should have known better) objected to the authors' treatment of Negroes during the pre-Civil War and Reconstruction periods of our history. The text in question is well written, scholarly, and liberal in its point of view. However, early in 1950, at the College of the City of New York, the Morison and Commager volume was charged by the college chapter of the NAACP and other campus organizations—including the fellow-traveling Young Progressives of America—with offering a biased treatment of the Negro as slave and freedman. The history department was not exactly pleased

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with the book's account of the Negro; but it insisted that the text was a good one and that its shortcomings in this particular point could be made up for by the instructor in the course of classroom discussion. Because of this firm stand, the book continues in use there. However, a year later at Queens College, also in New York City, the college chapter of the NAACP demanded that *The Growth of the American Republic* be dropped as a text by the history department; the college administration gave way, and its first volume was banned for classroom use. Substituted for it was Volume One of J. D. Hicks's *The Federal Union*, a good book that happens to contain the following remark: "Slave women rarely resisted the advances of white men, as their numerous mulatto progeny abundantly attested." It is perhaps unnecessary to add that this sentence, taken out of context, does not prove Professor Hicks a biased author. Above all, let us hope that it will not provide ammunition for still another campaign at Queens.

IN ALL this fuss about textbooks, two quite distinct questions are involved. The first is: How bad are the textbooks? The second: If they are bad, what is the best way of seeing that they become better?

Sometimes textbooks are written by the leading men in a particular field; more often they are written by run-of-the-mill educators with no little assistance from the editorial office of the publisher, some years after the work of the leading men has seeped down through the classrooms of the teachers' colleges. In consequence of the time lag, and because textbooks long obsolescent continue to be used, such books reflect the expert thinking of ten or twenty years ago. (Dealing with questions of race and immigration, they may reflect the bigoted or naive views of many leading sociologists twenty or thirty years ago, emphasizing the superiority of the "old immigrants" from Northern and Western Europe over the "new immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe.) And if we consider the way economists were talking about the American economy fifteen years ago—in the middle of the wreckage of the 1929 crisis, when the unaided efforts of capitalists only succeeded in deepening the depression, when businessmen cried out for government loans, government regulation, and government planning, when so many people saw in an unregulated economic system the cause of the depression—it is easy to see why many textbooks emphasize the weaknesses of a free economy, the importance of planning, and the value of governmental control. Their authors, from the perspective of 1952, would probably view governmental control of economic life as a not unmixed blessing. Nevertheless, these textbooks continue to instruct in the intellectual spirit of the 1930's.

Admittedly, any view on economics or immigration or anything else is not immune to criticism simply by virtue of having found the refuge of a textbook; admittedly textbooks cannot be above the judgment of the community; admittedly, the more criticism we have, the better. As Professor Preston H. Epps of the University of North Carolina writes in the December issue of *School and Society*, writers and teachers "must and will, of course, submit to criticism from the society. . . ." But what should be the process of this criticism? How can the community act so as really to improve textbooks without wrecking its school system?

TO ANSWER this important question, it is instructive to consider how our textbooks have been improved in the past—how the simple-minded and gushingly optimistic economic texts of the 20's and early 30's were replaced by the more critical works which are now themselves under attack, how the incorrect and dangerous views of earlier writers on immigration are being (gradually, it is true) replaced by more adequate discussions.

The principal method has been that of professional criticism—criticism by educators and scholars within the field, themselves disturbed at the divergence between the most authoritative findings of research and the views presented in textbooks. Most scholars

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today will freely concede that there is a good deal wrong with our textbooks. They are not so well written as they might be; their treatment of immigrant and minority groups as well as many other subjects (e.g. the Soviet Union) is hopelessly outdated; and on several matters pertaining to economics and government the pupil is not offered the kind of information which will enable him to understand the world in which he lives.

Realizing this, the professional critic—in studied contrast to the pressure group—nevertheless tries to lean over backwards to avoid scapegoating any particular author, title, and publisher. The study of the American Council on Education entitled *Intergroup Relations in Teaching Materials* takes elaborate precautions against this possibility. The investigation of economics education carried out by the Brookings Institution for the Sloan Foundation, while generally critical of the social studies textbooks for failing to provide reasonably adequate materials in economics, nevertheless would have none of them banned. (The Brookings study, incidentally, evaluates the Magruder text as sympathetic to the idea of governmental controls, but also points to Magruder's warning that too much governmental interference would stifle individual initiative. Brookings' President, Dr. H. G. Moulton, and his collaborator Dr. D. W. McKee, chairman of the Department of Economics at Westminster College, are by no means completely satisfied with Magruder's approach to economic education—but they propose writing better books rather than banning this one.) When the results of Dr. Richard W. Burkhardt's study of the treatment of the Soviet Union in textbooks were made known, the releases were so worded that no book could be blamed for what the author felt was a general failure on the part of almost all books to provide information necessary for a proper understanding of Russian affairs.

What improvement there has been in the American textbook in the past quarter century has been primarily in response to professional criticism rather than to pressure groups wielding clubs. Pressure groups have scored victories in getting one book banned and another altered. But isolated victories mean nothing without the support of professional opinion. During the 1920's, under the impact of a demand by super-patriots that certain "un-American" passages be removed from the books, authors and publishers did make revisions. But Professor Allan Nevins, recalling the hectic textbook quarrels of that day, points out that "the controversy ultimately died away" and the reinterpretations of the Revolutionary War and certain "heroic" episodes in our history, to which such strong objections were made, eventually "triumphed all along the line." Similarly, the substantial improvement in the treatment of racial and immigrant minorities in today's textbooks, compared with those published in the 1920's, has been far less the result of crusades against specific titles than of scholars' insistence upon the truth as they saw it.

It is true that there may be times when recognized scholars, limited by a specialist's viewpoint or swayed by prevailing winds of doctrine, will profess opinions even on their own subject that are open to criticism by an alert and perceptive citizenry. It is true that there may be times when it will be up to individuals or agencies concerned with the public good—or even with the interests of special groups—to air a situation which the profession itself is too slow to improve. It is true that there can be no monopoly where ideas are concerned and that a critic writing in a general magazine may sometimes give us a more broadly informed and socially responsible evaluation of a book than a scholar writing in a professional journal.

But, even so, the aim should be to discover and spread truth, not to deploy the greatest concentration of power and issue a ban. If the NAACP is disturbed at the way two of America's most distinguished historians treat the history of the American Negro—then it might be more constructive to encourage criticism and research to show they are wrong than to mobilize political resources in a power struggle to ban the book. The same is true of Jewish agencies concerned with the treat-

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ment of the later immigrants among whom the Jews bulked so large: their aim should be to show that certain charges are false; that certain facts have not been taken account of; that certain generalizations are only partial, distorted reflections of reality; and this is properly work for educators, sociologists, historians, and cultural critics, not public relations experts.

This is a rather slow process—education always is, even when it is a question of educating educators—and will not appeal to the impatient. But the impatient would do well to realize that there is nothing faster that promises any enduring improvement. Banning books may soothe outraged feelings; but only discussion, education, and criticism can get genuinely better books written.

Criticism and discussion not only promise more real improvement than pressure tactics; they rule out of court the undemocratic and un-American textbook ban, so akin to the book-burning procedures of Nazis and Communists. In the meantime, however, it is clear we shall have to deal directly with the offensive of the book-burners.

The authors and publishers, whom one might expect to be the first line of defense, seem to have decided that discretion is the better part of valor. The authors of books under attack have said very little in reply to their critics, and their silence is apparently dictated by the publishers. The textbook business, as businesses go, is a small one, amounting to about $96,000,000 annually split among sixty different houses. Blood, sweat, and tears go into securing the adoption of textbooks; but when a particular title is under attack the publisher is likely to fear that a too hearty rejoinder would itself advertise the attack and spread it to other communities; and that prolonged controversy over one title might jeopardize future adoptions. Instinctively, the tendency of the publisher is to stand clear of such situations. Magruder's publisher, for example, has not fought back and has made significant changes in the dead author's text.

Yet it is perhaps unfair to blame the individual publisher, since his competitors apparently have no scruples about profiting from the chaos created by pressure groups. Early last July, Georgia newspapers reported a statement by G. S. Hubbard, director of the State Department of Education's division of instructional materials, to the effect that the McGraw-Hill Book Company, to induce Georgia to put its own text on Georgia's approved list, was willing to take up the 30,000 copies of Magruder for which the State of Georgia no longer had any use. "They suggested they might offer us a generous exchange price on the Magruder book for their new book," Hubbard said. And this was not the only "exchange" offer he had received.

Teachers have been more willing than authors and publishers to defend textbooks under attack. When Little Rock's Board of Education banned Magruder, it did so despite the fact that continued use of the book had been recommended by the faculty of the high school, the principal, and the district superintendent. In Georgia, the State Board of Education had to override the Professional Textbook Committee to ban Magruder. There is now a movement under way in the Georgia Education Association to have the state legislature delegate textbook-adoption power exclusively to "people actually engaged in public education." At Queens College, the teachers in the history department wanted to keep Morison and Commager, but the administration insisted that it be dropped.

Teachers by themselves, and through their professional organizations, can go only so far. They are handicapped in their fight against censorship because traditions of classroom freedom from outside dictation are, in many localities, notoriously weak; a recent report on "The Freedom of the Public School Teacher" by the National Education Association reveals that teachers are becoming more and more subject to intimidation by various pressure groups. To an increasing extent, the NEA is looking to community action to support teachers against these attacks. This is a reasonable policy to pursue—the teachers, after all, have no place to turn but to the

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community—and one that should be endorsed by citizens interested in the welfare of their schools. But it is not without its own perils: by inviting the community to participate in the defense of textbooks, is there not some risk of further inflaming tempers and ideologies, of further widening the gap between objective criticism and partisan denunciation? Is there not real danger of further involving teachers and teaching materials with sections of the community that may be ignorant, irresponsible, and all too willing themselves to flex the muscle of censorship? Might it not end with an ugly spectacle of stereotype pitted against stereotype, smear against smear?

Dr. Willard E. Goslin, the former superintendent of schools in Pasadena, California, may have overlooked this problem when, in a speech before the United Parents Association in New York City on December 8, he invited community groups to share not only in the task of defending books—he mentioned specifically American history textbooks—but in selecting them as well. But what do labor unions, chambers of commerce, and parents generally know about American history? And will not their presence on textbook-adoption committees enhance the tendency of publishers to turn out books designed to please any particular interest that happens to be dominant—texts which will amount to nothing more than special pleadings disguised as history?

It is the scholar's role to rise above special interests. He is not always successful, but Professor Epps, whom I have cited before, is quite right in the contention that "so far in our history, no group has been able to view our society and set-up as objectively and intelligently as a group of devoted professional scholars. So far, we have wisely looked to such scholars to write the textbooks through which we want our youth to be introduced to the various fields of knowledge."

It will be necessary to remain constantly alert to see that a conflict over textbooks does not degenerate into a conflict of ideologies in which everyone will be his own authority and will feel called upon to get in a lick. That way lies calamity. Qualified criticism, not pressure tactics, is the appropriate means of making one's views felt insofar as the writing and revision of textbooks are concerned. To the extent that the NEA intends to seek community support in defending this thesis against irresponsible and demagogic agitation, it is engaged in a task which every citizen should ardently support.

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IN THE BACKWASH OF THE GREAT CRIME

Today's Barriers Between Jew and German

NORBERT MUHLEN

IN THE Franconian town of Aschaffenburg an empty lot has been transformed into a little park. At the center of the saplings and flower beds there stands a simple white tombstone on which are engraved two lines that were written by Friedrich Hölderlin more than a century ago:

Alas, the dead you cannot bring to life
Unless it is love that does so.

In smaller letters, the legend continues: "Here stood the synagogue of the Jewish Community, which on November 9, 1938, was destroyed by criminal hands."

Hölderlin's verse, chosen by the town fathers of Aschaffenburg for the memorial stone, might well serve as a melancholy introduction to any and every survey of present-day relations between Germans and Jews. These relations are still dominated by the dead millions whom murderous hands destroyed. Of revivifying love, there is precious little sign in Germany. It is rather human inadequacy, pettiness, and selfish weakness that best flourish in the backwash of so immense and so recent a crime.

CURRENTLY, German-Jewish relations in the Western part of the country are acted out on three quite different levels, little connected with each other. First, there is the official climate of opinion exemplified in the Bonn government's position with regard to Jews and anti-Semitism. Second, there is the public attitude toward those Jews who are active in German public life (in the decades before 1940, such Jews were targets for the most virulent anti-Semitism). Third, there is the public attitude toward the "foreign Jews," most of them displaced persons who have chosen to remain, for the present at least, in Germany.

The official attitude to the "Jewish question" is in complete contrast to that of the Nazi government. Since the inception of the Federal Republic of (West) Germany in September 1949, the government and the leaders of practically all political parties have undeviatingly condemned the Nazi crimes against the Jews, as well as anti-Semitism in general. But in the making of explicit and official friendly overtures, they have been slow and hesitant. For one thing, with many other issues—economic, social, political—pressing so urgently, and sometimes desperately, this "problem of the past," which is how most German leaders have come to regard it, gets pushed aside. Another factor, whose effect on the German attitude cannot

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DESPITE a large-scale riot outside the Knesset building in Jerusalem, the Israeli government has recently decided to open negotiations with West Germany for an indemnity for Nazi crimes against the Jews. Other Jewish communities throughout the world had also come to believe—though with nothing approaching unanimity, and with exceedingly mixed feelings—that the time was ripe for official, if limited, face-to-face discussions with German leaders. The fact is that German-Jewish relations are still darkened by the shadow of the great crime perpetrated by the Germans under Hitler, a shadow deepened of late by reports of a recrudescence of neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism. All the more welcome, therefore, should be this first-hand report by NORBERT MUHLEN on how Germans are thinking about Jews, the living and the dead, today. Mr. Muhlen, who is known to COMMENTARY readers for his previous informative reports on Germany, has just returned from six months of travel and observation in that country. This article, and the one following by Herbert Lüthy, form part of COMMENTARY's continuing discussion, from various points of view, of the crucial problems posed for the Western world by Germany.

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be ignored, is that their first unofficial gestures were eyed coldly, even suspiciously, by Jewish spokesmen.* The Jewish reaction was completely understandable. Since Germans evidenced no profound sense of atonement, world Jewry could hardly be expected to do such violence to its own natural feelings as would be required by a posture of supreme forgiveness—though at times it seemed oblivious of any possible middle position between complete forgiveness and hostile rejection of all Germans, at least on the public level.

In August of last year, forty-six countries ended their state of war with Germany. *Israel refused to join with them. This incident*, for whatever reason, shook German opinion from the deep lethargy into which it had fallen. The news induced "in many Germans feelings of mourning, sadness, and also sympathetic understanding," Erich Lueth, Hamburg's aggressive Director of the Senate, wrote in a full-page article that was reprinted in many leading German dailies. "One thing which threatens to happen must by no means happen: that the Germans, whether from shame or out of embarrassment, whether out of not knowing what to do or out of despair, should attempt to evade the Jewish issue." With words echoing Elliot Cohen's Berlin speech,† which had strongly affected him, Lueth wrote: "It is we who must be the first to talk to the Jews. . . . We must *beg* Israel for peace."

When I asked Chancellor Adenauer for his opinion of Dr. Lueth's proposal, he expressed full approval: "The Jews," he said, "have suffered the most bitter injury and injustice. Please believe me that the greatest part of the German people was and is truly filled with revulsion against the deeds of the past. We must find a way to let the Jews know it, they have a right to it."

Soon afterwards, on September 27, the Federal parliament in Bonn met to listen to what most observers regarded as something long overdue: a governmental declaration that "The Federal government is prepared to *cooperate with the representatives of the* Jews and of the State of Israel to solve the material problems of reparations in order to ease the way toward a definitive indemnity for the infinite suffering of the Jews." At the conclusion of this statement, the whole house rose quite spontaneously to its feet to demonstrate its sympathy for the Jewish victims of Nazism. The leaders of all political parties—excepting that of the Communists who remained silent, and that of the (neo-Nazi) Socialist Reich party who was not present—spoke up in favor of the government's action.

This belated declaration was accorded a most skeptical welcome by Jews abroad. Jewish organizations hastened to formulate a set of demands that would "test the good faith" of the German offer—demands for the outlawing of the expression of anti-Semitic sentiments and opinions that it would have been deemed too extreme to present to an American or British government, and which no constitutional regime could really carry out. But Bonn's offer has not been rejected, despite acrimonious debate in all Jewish communities and some near-riots in Israel's Knesset; and German and Jewish—including Israeli—representatives will soon be meeting face to face. Perhaps the gulf will yet be bridged—in a spirit of cautious reasonableness, if nothing more.

THE emerging sun of good will, however, may easily disappear behind financial, diplomatic, and legalistic clouds. There are signs that this process has already begun.

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* The pattern first appeared in 1949 when Konrad Adenauer, just elected as the first chancellor of the newly founded Federal Republic of (West) Germany, happened to be staying in the same Swiss summer resort as Chaim Weizmann, just elected the first president of the newly founded State of Israel. Dr. Adenauer (whose personal record as a lifelong foe of Nazism and anti-Semitism is spotless) wanted to pay a courtesy call; he was told that the Jew did not want to see the German. Similarly, when Theodor Heuss, the brilliant democratic intellectual and first president of the Federal Republic, publicly proclaimed that all Germans, Nazi and anti-Nazi, had a share in the "collective *shame*" for what the Nazis had done to the Jews, he was violently attacked by Jewish organizations for "trying to deny the collective *guilt*" of all Germans.

† See "What Do the Germans Propose to Do?" by Elliot E. Cohen, in the September 1950 COMMENTARY.

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"Whatever we do," I was told by a German official close to Chancellor Adenauer, "it can never be enough. We know that. We cannot make material amends for the loss of somebody's parents gassed in Auschwitz. We cannot even make amends for, say, the loss of 'his' mountains by a refugee from Bavaria who used to climb them every weekend before he had to flee his native land. Of course, we have to try and we shall try to do our best. But then, there is another limit to our doing everything that ought to be done —our financial situation. With the millions of refugees and expellees from the East whom we have to support and whom we cannot adequately support, with the millions of war victims who cannot support themselves, with the housing situation and other vital reconstruction tasks, and with our economy precariously close to crisis all the time, we just cannot afford to be as generous to the Jews as we know we should be."

All this is true enough. Yet it is no matter for surprise that many Jews should read into such explanations a preliminary attempt to evade full responsibility.

The question would be complicated enough if there were only the individual Jewish claims for restitution (*Rückerstattung*) and compensation (*Wiedergutmachung*). Individual property expropriated or sold at a loss under Nazi rule is being returned to its original Jewish owners; where bona fide buyers now hold it, the German government has to pay damages to the latter. Much of the real estate formerly owned by Jews has already been returned, and other property will eventually be handed back within the next years. The pace is slow, but then such legal procedures always are.

The matter becomes more involved when we reach the claims for "collective reparations" in the form in which the State of Israel has filed them. The horse-trading which is almost necessarily bound to dominate negotiations over these "reparations claims" will work hard against a genuine atmosphere of reconciliation. How does one reckon the cash value of Jewish lives lost or careers wrecked? With the "damages" for mass murder to be paid for in dollars and cents, there is ample room for double-talk, demagoguery, and nasty imputations of bad faith. Dollars-and-cents restitution can never be the measure of German repentance, no more than it can be the price of Jewish forgiveness. To mix the two problems is to court unending recrimination and utter moral confusion. Money restitution will be made, in some form and amount. But trust and acceptance must be won on other levels and by the exchange of other goods.

THE mood of the Bonn government pretty accurately reflects that of most Germans, so far as anti-Semitism is concerned. The overwhelming majority want "peace with the Jews," though for many this probably means only the absence of enmity made possible by an absence of contacts.

Even the ruthless, avowedly anti-democratic leaders of the neo-Nazi SRP (Sozialistische Reichspartei), though they exploit every popular grievance and are undisguisedly nostalgic for the Third Reich, have no use for anti-Semitism. This represents no moral revolution on their part—they simply feel that Hitler's anti-Semitism was a gross political error and, besides, that the issue no longer has demagogic value. Fritz Dorls, the Fuehrer of the SRP in the Bonn parliament, a man obsessed with a lust for power and a hatred of democracy, asserted in a talk with this writer that he and his party stood for "full and equal rights for the Jews," and that Hitler's Jewish policies had been "fundamentally wrong." Anti-Semitism, he said, is "rejected by the SRP as a point of principle." Dorls's second-in-command, ambitious Count Wolf von Westarp, added that there are "one full Jew and two half-Jews" in the party's central executive committee, and that "anti-Semitism has no place in its ranks." Insincere as they may be, their remarks certainly indicate how unfashionable anti-Semitism as a *Weltanschauung* is in Germany.

The sole public statement defending Hitler's anti-Semitism was made in 1950 by one Fritz Hedler, then deputy of the DRP (Deutsche Rechtspartei), a semi-Nazi splin-

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ter party whose most radical members have since formed the neo-Nazi SRP; in an election speech, he said that "there should have been better ways to get rid of the Jews than those used by Adolf Hitler." He was promptly expelled from his party, and at present seems to have faded from the German political scene altogether. More recently, the first —and so far only—anti-Semitic speech, a veiled one at that, was delivered in the Bonn parliament, fifty days after the governmental declaration on restitution, by Franz Richter, a Sudeten expellee elected in Lower Saxony on the DRP ticket and now affiliated with the SRP. He claimed that for Germans to offer reparations to Israel meant trading with an enemy who had not yet ended his state of war with Germany, and that therefore the Bonn deputies who advocated these reparations were "collaborators who, according to the usage of our liberators, must be punished, as you well know, as you have approved, and as they deserve." The rest of the house answered with furious protest, and Richter was immediately silenced by the chairman.

THAT racist anti-Semitism in the Hitler tradition has disappeared from German public affairs is shown most convincingly by the fact that not a single voice has been raised so far to attack as Jews those Germans of Jewish descent, or that substantial number of Germans called by Hitler *Mischlinge* (people with one to three Jewish grandparents), who are active today in German political and and academic life. In the Weimar Republic, when such a man was elected or appointed to a public office or professorship, the rightist press, not to mention the Nazi press, was quick with an anti-Semitic slander. In 1951, however, not even an allusion to the fact that he was a Jew was made when Rudolf Katz was appointed vice-president of the Verfassungsgerichtshof, a kind of federal supreme court; and few people either know or are interested in the fact that the government's Associate Federal Secretary of Justice, Walter Strauss, or the legal adviser to the new Foreign Office, Erich Kaufmann, to name only two, are "full" Jews.

That Hitler "committed a crime" against the Jews, or that his anti-Semitism was "*eine ganz grosse Schweinerei*" is quite commonplace for older Germans to say. Usually they state this in a mild, very matter-of-fact way, which leaves no doubt as to their sincerity but which does provoke some misgivings as to whether they are fully aware of what Nazi anti-Semitism meant and did. Most Germans with whom I got to talk about Hitler's Jewish policies condemned the *Kristallnacht*—the evening of November 9, 1938 when the SA and SS burned down the synagogues, looted Jewish shops, destroyed Jewish property, and arrested many Jews "in retaliation for the Grynszpan murder in Paris" —while not mentioning the extermination of six million Jewish persons between 1942 and 1945. The *Kristallnacht* was something many of them witnessed personally. The death camps they learned about at a time when their world was, physically and morally, collapsing about them, when sheer survival preoccupied their wits; hence, though they are acquainted by now with all the facts, these facts still lack full status *as a reality*. Or perhaps one should say rather that their minds still resist accepting these facts as a reality; there can be no doubt that a profound sense of impotent shame makes most Germans shy away from any reflection on the enormous crime and keeps them from accepting responsibility for anything but the lesser one.

As for the young, meaning most Germans who are still under thirty, they have little awareness of or interest in the whole tragic matter. They grew up after it was over, and while they have the overpowering memories of the chaos that prevailed at the end of the war and in the first postwar years, few have had any personal experience of Nazi anti-Semitism in action, or even any personal contact with Jews. Among a small group of younger intellectuals, there has developed a sort of violent philo-Semitism; but, for most, neither anti-Semitism nor anti-anti-Semitism is of moment—their interest in politics is in any case peripheral, and all their passion is involved in their personal futures.

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NEVERTHELESS, despite the attitude of the Bonn government and the bad conscience and indifference of most of the people, there are thin currents of anti-Semitism still trickling through German society. To some extent, unhappily, these currents are fed by the presence and behavior of a certain segment among the displaced persons.

The great mass of the Jewish DP's have by now left Germany. Of those who remained, a small number established businesses and settled down; there are also approximately 1,000 who married German girls and disappeared into German life (no case of a Jewish DP girl having married a German is known to this writer). There is a somewhat larger group of Jews still living in the last Jewish DP camp in Föhrenwald in Upper Bavaria; these are the so-called "hard-core" cases, generally sick people waiting to be sent to Israel by agreement with the International Refugee Organization (IRO). In this camp are also the so-called "returnees," Jews who returned from Israel after having lived there for one or more years. All these inmates are supported by unemployment insurance paid out rather grudgingly by the local Bavarian authorities, and by donations from American organizations such as the International Rescue Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, and the Joint Distribution Committee (the last snubbing "returnees" as a rule). Hidden away from public view, living a rather autarchic community life (except for shopping or bartering in the nearby village, employing local cleaning women, and having clandestine relations with their Bavarian neighbors), these DP's have practically no contacts with Germans.

IT IS different with that unhappily larger and more conspicuous group of Jewish DP's who preferred to stay on in postwar Germany, after the great majority of Jewish DP's had left, because it afforded them an opportunity to live on the fringe of society.

Munich's Möhlstrasse, where a sizable proportion of these DP's congregate,* has overcome its lowly black-market beginnings; it looks more settled today than it did two years ago, with new coffeehouses and restaurants among its many food, fur, silver, and textile stores, and with expensive cars parked in front of them; rather tough-looking groups of young men watch you closely as you walk the street. Every police raid on the Möhlstrasse last year turned up large quantities of stolen or smuggled goods. Along with smuggling on a big scale, various other "rackets" and "crime syndicates" flourish.

Similar situations exist in other big and some smaller cities. A nationwide band, calling itself "The Strong Ones" (*Die Starken*), with methods very similar to the American gangs of the Prohibition era, is known to dominate most DP crime. When one of its members is "taken for a ride" and knifed to death, or when others are arrested, police and press refer only to "X, an alien," or "a member of the alien gang, The Strong Ones," but the common assumption is that a Jew is meant. Even when "alien" actually refers to a Greek, a Ukrainian, a Slovak, or another national of Germany's great underworld, it is usually taken for granted that he is a Jew.

Only a few fair and thoughtful Germans seem to remember that it was Hitler who threw these DP's, both the Jews and the others, onto the path of crime, first by uprooting them from their native communities, then by forcing them to dodge and break the law continuously if they wanted to survive, finally by making them believe that laws were made for others and that they had no duty toward the others—in this case mainly, and particularly, the Germans. And few Germans will take the time to recognize the fact that these Jewish DP's are only part of the last small residue of a large group that has left Germany, and that they constitute a tiny, very abnormal selection from "the Jews" as a whole. To many Germans, especially the young and very young ones, these outlaw Jews—the only Jews they have ever seen—almost necessarily appear as *the* Jews.

What had been a vicious myth of anti-Semitic invention for more than a century,

* See "The Shooting on the Möhlstrasse," by Norbert Muhlen, COMMENTARY, October 1949.

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and one which played such a large role in the history of German anti-Semitism: the claim that the Jews were "aliens" who could not and would not be integrated into German life, that they were parasites on the rest of the population—is objectively true of these DP's. As a matter of fact, they would be the first to proclaim it, from their hatred of Germany as well as from an arrogance with which they compensate themselves for the humiliations and inhuman outrages they suffered under Hitler.

THE stereotype of the Jew as a parasitic "enemy of society" has always been a special obsession of the Germans, who have a primitive, near-tribal fear and suspicion of "outsiders."* And not only has this stereotype been given new life in Western Germany since 1945—it has been reinforced during the past couple of years by several rather sensational scandals that were front-page news and became topics of general conversation. After the Morgenbesser case in Frankfort on the Main, where the director of the Jewish Restitution Bank and some of his co-workers fled abroad after embezzling the capital of their bank—for the most part "Jewish money" —the case of Philipp Auerbach in Munich has become the center of nationwide interest.

The "Auerbach case" cannot be understood without a look at the atmosphere in Germany, and the situation of the Jews there, in the first postwar years. Law and order had broken down. Even that old and reliable backbone of German orderliness, the bureaucracy, did not prove immune to corruption. The top police officials in Munich, and a number of other high officials appointed in the first postwar years—all non-Jews—have since been removed from office on account of their shady deals. Jews experienced perhaps greater temptation than others. After all the injustice done them, many felt no sense of responsibility toward the German community. Moreover, they could act with a certain measure of impunity. Many Germans—not to speak of the occupation authorities—at the time gave a kind of general absolution to anything done by them. Thus, among some unscrupulous Jews, there developed a feeling that "anything goes."

Philipp Auerbach was an ambitious, perhaps mentally sick, yet impressive adventurer. Born in 1906 in Hamburg, where he attended the Hebrew High School without being graduated from it, then going into business, he left Germany for Belgium when Hitler came to power. In his country of exile, he was sentenced and fined for unlawful acts as a drug manufacturer. He was arrested by the Nazis when they invaded Belgium, and was sent to several concentration camps, the last one being that of Gross-Rosen, where he became a "barracks chief." Charges by five Jewish fellow inmates that he mistreated them and others, and participated in privately selling their food rations, have been published by *Atid,* a Jewish magazine in Brussels, but have not been proved. In 1945 he was liberated by the British and employed for a while by their Military Government which finally dismissed him for incompetence.

At the time, Bavaria had just fired its first —non-Jewish—State Commissioner for the Persecutees of Hitler, and was looking for a new one. On the recommendation of the Social Democratic party, which Auerbach had joined, and vouched for by Jewish relief organizations, Auerbach was appointed to this important job. In his *curriculum vitae,* which nobody bothered to check, he introduced himself as a doctor of science, a hero of the anti-Nazi resistance, and a man later

* Germans tend in any case to be insecure in the face of "the alien." That this insecurity stems from the self-consciousness of a half-formed, still uncohesive nation, has been argued by German historians since Theodor Mommsen wrote his splendid *Another Word on Our Jews.* Since the alien outgroups domesticated in Germany have always hailed from the East of Europe—whether they were Jews or Poles—they were usually "backward" in terms of Western culture, so that the Germans felt they had to "defend themselves" against them. "Before the war, in the good old times, we had lots of foreigners here every summer; but now things are bad, now only the aliens [sic] are coming," an old lady told me on a Munich park bench. The most compact and the most conspicuous group of such "aliens" are the Jewish DP's.

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sentenced to death by a Nazi People's Court —none of which was at all true. As State Commissioner for the Persecutees of Hitler, and later as president of the Land Compensation Office, Auerbach gave weekly sermons over the Bavarian radio, acquired influence by involving himself in local politics, acted as assistant rabbi of the Jewish communities in Bavaria as well as their political representative, and was a public speaker on every occasion at which Hitler's victims made themselves heard. Under his jurisdiction were the approximately one hundred thousand surviving Jews who had crowded into Bavaria after the war, as well as the claims of all other Bavarian persecutees or their heirs. He had the power to decide what claims going through his office should be approved or not, and whether there was to be immediate payment or none. The settlement of these claims involved complicated deals with Bavarian authorities and banks.

ALTHOUGH there were persistent rumors about strange things that went on in Auerbach's office, ranging from bribery to blackmail, forgery, perjury, theft, and large-scale smuggling, they provoked no action by the government. But finally, in the summer of 1951, the Bavarian Minister of Justice raided Auerbach's office and arrested him. The minister was Joseph Mueller, a colorful personality himself, three times arrested by the Gestapo People's Court as a secret agent for the Allies and conspirator against Hitler's life, now an advocate of German appeasement of Soviet Russia, and a personal foe of Auerbach. The evidence in Auerbach's files appeared to substantiate the very grave charges against him; but he pleaded not guilty when, on November 21, he was charged with three cases of embezzlement in office, two cases of blackmail, nine cases of larceny and fraud, and one case each of accepting bribes, extorting fees, perjury, illegal use of academic titles, and violations of the Allied Military Government currency laws.

Whether Auerbach was himself legally implicated in all these deeds or was ignorant of their commission by his employees—some of whom have fled abroad, admitting their guilt—has still to be decided by a regular court. It is certain that of the 13,767 cases on which payments were made through his office, 1,566 turned out to be forged, and 414 probably forged. Of indorsed payments pre-financed by Bavarian banks to the Auerbach office, another considerable number was based on forgeries. To get the money, which was principally contributed by the Bavarian government, persecutees had only to be approved by Auerbach, and supply an affidavit sworn under a rabbinical oath. (That the rabbi who officiated, a close friend of Auerbach, came to Munich as a penniless DP in 1945, and one year later bought a princely country estate, was another disagreeable facet of this thoroughly disagreeable affair.) In addition, Auerbach's office had traded in gift packages ordered or sent from abroad, selling them on the black market through private dealers. At least 34,460 kilograms of coffee and 52 million cigarettes were disposed of in this manner. Finally, there were complaints by Jewish persecutees that their property had disappeared in the office of Auerbach rather than been given back to them; there were also charges that memorial monuments to the victims of concentration camps promoted by him, as well as issues of memorial stamps in their honor, all served to enrich Auerbach. As this article is written, an investigating committee of the Bavarian parliament is scrutinizing the case, and it must be said that this committee, as well as Minister Mueller and the greater part of the German press, have been most scrupulous to avoid possible anti-Semitic overtones in prosecuting and reporting the case. Not, however, with complete success.

This ugly affair can be—and has been—"explained," of course. After all, German officialdom as a whole, as we have indicated, has not been so pure and spotless after the war that the Auerbach case could be viewed and judged in isolation. And then, the business of "compensating" a large number of penniless foreigners for losses the actuality of which could be rarely proved, at least not in a hurry, while payments had to be made

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in a hurry, was something so unheard of that only a non-bureaucratic "bohemian" like Auerbach could tackle the job at all, and it is not too astonishing that he might have to use unusual methods that would not stand up against later legalistic scrutiny. One could go on and on. . . .

But most Germans, it is my impression, do not think about the juicy scandal around Auerbach, or the crime chronicle of the DP's and "The Strong Ones," in such large terms: the great grafter in his luxurious office, and the little racketeer on the next street corner, were just "Jews" to be distrusted and disliked. As a result, anti-Semitic insinuations and innuendoes that would not have been listened to a few years ago are again being heard; they do not intrude into politics, are rarely made explicit in print, and certainly do not have the pathological accents of the Nazi epoch; yet they taint the atmosphere.

IT WAS probably inevitable that, in the backwash of crime, the ruination and corruption of the past should still be visible, and should poisonously infect the present. What in American eyes are "normal" standards of community relations and group tolerance cannot yet be applied in Germany where the after-effects of totalitarian rule and total war still dominate all physical, moral, and spiritual existence, notwithstanding the appearances and real achievements of reconstruction. Since so few Jews are left, and since the few who are left form a very abnormal group, German attitudes toward them do not indicate much about the index of real tolerance prevailing today in Germany. But these attitudes do point to a more fundamental fact, namely, that the majority of Germans have deep down in their souls not clearly divorced themselves from the Nazi period.

In this respect, the present attitude to Hitler's murder of those non-Jewish Germans who actively opposed him is significantly depressing. Far from celebrating the memory of the men who tried to kill Hitler on July 20, 1944 and were murdered by his hangmen, far from expressing pride in the Munich students and professors who called for rebellion against Hitler and were executed by him, a public debate actually rages today as to whether they—or any other Germans—had the right actively to oppose a government in power, and whether the oath sworn to the Fuehrer should not have been more binding than any considerations of moral and natural law. Indeed, it is not too much to say that these martyrs do not find that sympathy in the eyes of many non-Nazi Germans today which even the Jews receive, for while the Jews are considered passive victims of governmental *force majeure*, the conspirators and rebels are held to have transgressed the border of obedient submission to the *Staat*, and thus set themselves apart from "right" standards of behavior.

The central ominous fact about Germany today is that to the ordinary German the Third Reich appears as a decade of German history more or less like other decades of the past, with its regrettable "excesses" as well as its "good sides," though perhaps a bit more spectacular. The attempts of a minority of democratic Germans to alter this state of mind have not yet achieved much—not to mention the attempts, sometimes clumsy, often naive, and occasionally insincere, of American occupation personnel, which have in the final balance perhaps done more harm than good. That most Germans who are so indifferent about the Nazi past are by no means Nazis themselves, but rather *Unpolitische* ("non-politicals"), does not give much consolation; for it is exactly on the base of such "non-political" individuals forming the majority of the people that totalitarianism comes to power and rule.

If the Germans today are far from being the racist, bloodthirsty, Nietzschean Nazis that some fearful propagandists would have us believe, they seem equally far from being democratic citizens of a healthy, regenerated community. Spiritually tired, physically hard-working, retreating into the total privacy of their personal worlds, they are a mass of passive individuals who have not yet found the beginning of that moral coherence and social initiative which form the foundation of any civilized, integrated community.

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BEHIND REAWAKENED GERMAN NATIONALISM

Which Path, Schumacher's or Adenauer's?

HERBERT LÜTHY

IN THE first months after the collapse of the Third Reich, Allied and neutral journalists often reported a sentiment voiced by the Germans or written on the walls of ruined cities: "It is a disgrace to be German!" This statement, seemingly so unambiguous, is a master key to the ambiguities of postwar Germany. Spoken by Germans, among Germans, in sincere horror of what had been done in their name, it contained the promise of a new beginning. But uttered by a German before a representative of the victors, before a journalist itching to report it, before occupation authorities in search of "good Germans" to whom to assign jobs, licenses, and the advantages of "collaboration," it became a suspect and repugnant self-abasement as well as an easy opportunity for guilty persons to wash themselves in a great bath of collective guilt. And finally, when this statement was repeated by the victors in smug consciousness of their superiority to this accursed nation, it became the expression of that selfsame national arrogance, that selfsame racist stupidity, conscious or unconscious, for which one reproached the Germans. It is the old parable of the self-righteous man and the publican—with the decisive difference that the publican this time could not confess in front of the self-righteous man. In consequence of all these factors, the theme altered. It was not a "disgrace," but a "misfortune" to be a German.

So much for German guilt: for some, a subject for profound reflection, scarcely suited for exhibition in the public square; a bad alibi for others—among these, the victors in a war of annihilation which they had waged "totally" with saturation bombing and burning phosphorus; they were behaving as victors have always behaved, annexing and bartering the shreds of the conquered land, tearing away a fourth of Germany, expelling a dozen million Germans who had lived there from generation to generation since the Middle Ages. What was to become of these expellees, no one asked—death would be just what they deserved. So the rump of a devastated Germany was filled with millions of refugees, uprooted, declassed, hopeless, to the unanimous applause of a united, just, and democratic world—in which the Soviet Union claimed full membership. It is somewhat difficult today to recall the atmosphere of general hypocrisy about "democratic war aims," of reiterated lies about "our great Russian ally," the murky smoke screen to retain a while longer the illusion of "the unity of the free world"—on which anti-fascism foundered on the very day of victory. All the slovenly solutions which have subsequently

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THERE are few phenomena more baffling to the American observer than the political struggle now taking place in Western Germany between the tendencies led by Kurt Schumacher and Konrad Adenauer. From the cursory press reports, it would appear that it is a matter of conservatism vs. socialism, or pro-Americanism vs. anti-Americanism, or European cooperation vs. nationalism, as represented by Adenauer and Schumacher respectively. But, as HERBERT LÜTHY here points out, such facile antitheses completely miss the point. It is the issue of the most adequate road to German unity—and ultimately European unity—that is really involved; and this issue will continue to challenge Western policy-makers no matter which German faction is victorious, or which German policy gets the upper hand. Mr. Lüthy is a Swiss journalist and economic historian, now living in Paris, whose brilliant political writing it has been COMMENTARY'S privilege to bring to an American audience. His most recent contribution was "Why Five Million Frenchmen Vote Communist" in the September 1951 issue. The present article is translated from the French by Maurice J. Goldbloom.

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cost us so dear, beginning with the formula of "unconditional surrender," served only to keep up this illusion, the falsity of which was nowhere more clearly visible than in Germany.

This atmosphere was scarcely propitious to conscience-searching. Very quickly, the Germans set about demanding the credentials of their judges. Those who were condemning them—look at what they themselves were doing! In the name of what new and better world were they judging? And the dialogue degenerated into a wrangle of teen-agers: "You're a rat!" "Well, you're another!" Then, one fine day, all the world wearied of it; the enemy of humanity was now elsewhere, and all was simply forgotten—the last slovenly solution that formed the logical conclusion of a chain of slovenly solutions.

The conscience-searching failed, and it is a Germany with a troubled conscience that is reconstructing herself continuously before the eyes of a world torn between contradictory fears. Since nothing had been clarified, nothing was settled, and everything remains suspect. To read the reports on Germany in the foreign press, the very fact that the Germans have returned to work, to the reconstruction of their destroyed industry which must henceforth support a swollen population penned in a reduced space, appears almost to be proof of their indefatigable maleficence.

AT THE moment of the Third Reich's collapse, the Allied press had been full of sinister predictions—undoubtedly suggested in large part by the propaganda machine of Dr. Goebbels—according to which even the complete occupation of Germany would mean, not the end of the war, but its transformation into a guerrilla war conducted by a clandestine Nazi network, an armed terrorist resistance rich in enormous stocks of arms, perhaps even having underground armament factories. The reporters on the lookout for this underground resistance found only a people crushed, prostrate, amorphous, ready to accept every form of collaboration and every gospel; at most, during the first days of the occupation, there was a poor fanatical street urchin here and there who shook his fist at the Allied flags. Along with the military and police machinery of the totalitarian state, Nazism itself seemed swept from the face of the earth.

Obviously, no faith was placed in this miracle. Reporters and visitors have continued to seek out, record, and pin down every symptom of a reawakening of German nationalism. The detection of signs of nationalism has often been the sole function of their tours of Germany. Eventually they had to find what they were seeking: since 1948 there is no longer any doubt that a new German nationalism is slowly awakening. It sometimes almost seems as if the world was boiling with impatience for it to reappear, thus justifying the opinions it had always held on a Germany eternally incorrigible—and therefore requiring no serious or complicated thought. The facility with which a large part of the international press echoed any slightest manifestation of German impertinence, however isolated and insignificant it might be, exaggerating and twisting it, while remaining silent on all the rest of German reality, is really inconceivable. Skepticism is an honorable quality, and in the case of Germany well justified by past experience; but it can also turn into an obsession and into systematic defamation.

THERE is, then, a reawakening of German nationalism. Let us note at once that this word is strangely lacking in precision. The French *Petit Larousse* laconically defines it: "Nationalism: a determined preference for that which is concerned with the nation"—a banal sentiment, perfectly honorable, and extremely current in France among other places. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is more explicit, but even less condemnatory: "Nationalism: patriotic feeling, principles, or efforts; policy of national independence." All these are universally recognized as virtues, if not abroad, at least at home. It seems that "nationalism" only designates a vice when joined with the adjective "German," and that the vice is particularly in the adjective. What

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is it that is especially unhealthy about German nationalism?

For many observers, the mere fact that the Germans do not seem ashamed to be Germans, that they once again dare to affirm themselves, appears in itself to be sufficiently terrible. But even such distortions of judgment have some relation to the facts: it is true that German nationalism is "something else again." It is not a nationalism that is the natural expression of an existing nation, but rather a nationalism without a nation, one that is wilfully and aggressively in search of a nation to create. There is nothing paradoxical about this. To a certain extent, this could even be the truest definition of nationalism: an unhealthy effort to compensate for the absence of national consciousness. The old nations of Western Europe have no need of nationalism; they exist, and their nationalism is only a survival from a past effort, or an atavism which reawakens when their existence is threatened. Germany does not as yet exist as a nation, and many misunderstandings derive from trying to attribute to it, by analogy, a national personality which it does not have.

France, England, Spain, each has a continuous national history of a thousand years, in an almost changeless framework, with a stable geographical and spiritual center. Germany has neither a common history, nor framework, nor center; "Germany," until the 19th century, was a geographical expression as empty of national feeling as "Europe." Neither the Empire of the Middle Ages nor that of the Hapsburgs was a prefiguration of "Germany"; they were always supranational empires, "Roman," the succession to which was tied up with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Western and Eastern Germany do not have a hundred years of history in common, and the fundamental trait of the various histories of Germany written in the last century by Germans is a sort of bad conscience in the face of this lack of solidarity. Western Germany, rich, commercial, industrial, completely oriented toward the West and toward Italy, has never troubled itself about the age-long struggle of the Germans in the East on the frontiers of the Slav world; as little as the Emperor Frederick II, in his duel with the Papacy and in his Sicilian adventure, troubled or even informed himself about the battle which a handful of Eastern Germans were at the same moment waging at Liegnitz against the Mongols of Genghis Khan; as little as the court of Versailles and its German allies, conducting a war of spoliation against the Holy Roman Empire, troubled themselves about a Vienna that was in their time being besieged by the Turks. Neither continuity, nor unity, nor solidarity, neither nucleus nor exact outline —except for the past eighty years, Germany has existed only in the form of a vague imperative, not as a nation, but as an intermittent will to be a nation, a nationalist drive which rises periodically like an attack of fever.

It would be an exaggeration to say that Germany is today a victim of that fever. If one does not let oneself be taken in by official speeches and electoral demagogy, one is astounded by the indifference of the Germans of the West to those of Central Germany under Soviet rule, to their old capital in distress, to the refugees from Polonized or Russified Eastern Germany who have lost everything—even to the evacuees from bombed cities in their midst who were stranded in certain areas of West Germany and now would like to return home. For example, the city of Hamburg has adamantly refused to permit its own evacuees to return from Schleswig-Holstein, that poorhouse of the Republic, where the number of refugees of all origins exceeds by far the number of natives. When once the iron corset of the national state which united them was burst, the sense of national unity also went to bits. The Germans are not a nation: but they have a bad conscience toward themselves, and this bad conscience is the basic trouble with "German nationalism," which is often little else than a vociferous attempt to compensate for a lack of fundamental patriotism. Here is the whole origin—even literary—of *"Deutschland, Deutschland über alles."*

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But is this nationalism of bad conscience no more than a gratuitous aberration of the German spirit? Has German unity no real imperative of any kind?

Germany is dangerous, all the world has agreed on this point; but the world is coming to be aware of the fact that the absence of Germany is also dangerous. It is this crossroads of Europe, this buffer zone between our highly differentiated peripheral civilization and the huge amorphous mass of the Eurasian plains, which is dangerous; and what one calls the German danger exists, as it were, independently of the Germans. Germany in the last war was erased from the political map of the world, and that empty space where the victors met one another is more than ever charged with dangers of war. This may prove nothing except that this buffer zone, deprived of natural barriers and of natural centers, all sand and marsh, has required and continues to require a concentration of forces, the maintenance of an artificial dike. And it might at least stimulate us to reflect on whether certain reactions and certain fits of fear or aggressiveness that we impute to the German "national character" are not the result of a situation which would have implanted a similar image on no matter what population was placed at this crossroads of Europe.

It is quite usual these days to lump millions of individuals under a common term so as to be able to define all these different human beings simply by their nationality, as if they had chosen it or as if nationality were an innate quality. The fashion is to deduce the institutions and history of a people from inherent psychological qualities supposedly peculiar to it, while forgetting the only thing that this people really has in common, its collective situation in the face of other organized collectivities. This procedure, which replaces explanation by myth, is at the bottom of all racism. The fact is that during its very short history of eighty years, Germany has existed only by virtue of an iron corset wrapped around herself to keep her from disintegrating. Nationalism made do for national consciousness, the uniform replacing organic unity—whence the diseased importance of the uniform and of nationalism. And, simplifying somewhat, it is the frontier or, rather, the absence of a frontier in the East that has imposed on Germany an armor of which many of the Germans of the South and West felt no need, and by which Europe has always been alarmed.

All those visible rancors and resentments of a nation mutilated, parceled out, and cut to pieces, which one lists under the common denominator of "nationalism," are today nothing but a diffused and impotent vapor; for them to become a motive force, it is necessary that they be captured by an engine directed toward a goal. The old engine, which was driven off the rails by a lunatic, no longer exists. The Republic of Bonn converts nothing of this vapor into energy. It suffices to look at the map of what was once Germany—and the universal prating about an imaginary "line of the Elbe," for example, shows well how very few people take the trouble to look at the map—to ascertain that this Western Germany, situated in a semicircle around the Russian zone (itself "cored" by the Western enclave of Berlin), will never be viable; and that Bonn, that provisional center placed prudently west of the Rhine, will never be able to become a capital—as little as Vichy, whose atmosphere it strangely recalls. What is the engine that can capture "German nationalism"? In other words, toward what end is it possible for this confused human and industrial potential, this enormous German reality, to be directed?

It would have been well for the Western statesmen to ask themselves, immediately after the war, what they were going to do, or what they wanted the Germans to do. Germany was at their disposal, without will, without means of action, without an imaginable future; for several years it awaited a word, a direction, an idea from those who had conquered it. What did they expect of the Germans? What did they wish to do with their total victory? While victors were mistrustfully investigating the obscure wills of the Germans, at a time when *nothing* de-

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pended on the Germans, the latter were asking anxiously what their conquerors' intentions were. But nothing was forthcoming. To the extent that the Western allies had, and imposed, ideas, they were ideas relevant to the past, not to the present, and still less to the future. They had forgotten to think beyond military victory, beyond unconditional surrender, so as to escape thinking about the conditions of the surrender.

Consequently, the Germans set about working out their own views of a possible future. And it would seem that they have drawn more constructive lessons from their defeat than the victors have up to now drawn from their victory. Three quite coherent major political viewpoints have been defined: Schumacher's democratic nationalism, Adenauer's European federalism, and a neutralism that is still unorganized.

The situation of Germany, occupied by, and partitioned between, the victors, is such that every taking of a stand on "domestic" politics is likewise the taking of a stand in the international conflict between East and West; there is no domestic politics in Germany. One of the positions which would have been logically possible, a pro-Soviet orientation, is practically devoid of adherents outside the Soviet zone, where it is imposed by force. The experience of Russian occupation in Central Germany, of the Russian reality by hundreds of thousands of prisoners, the uninterrupted exodus of refugees from the Russian zone, and above all the mass expulsion of millions of Germans from the former Eastern provinces, have rendered Germany impervious to Soviet propaganda, at least for the present and the near future.

For the two major parties that constitute the government and the opposition in Bonn, the taking of a pro-Western stand is perforce the absolute point of departure. It is only within this framework that the struggle takes place between the official, "defensive" policy of integrating a "little Germany" (that of the West) into a little Europe (that of the West), and the "Western offensive," "Great Germany" policy of the Socialists. But there is also a "neutralist" ideology that toys with an Eastern orientation on the model of the Treaty of Rapallo, and which has come to light since the consolidation of the Western republic: it has become particularly defined in the course of the discussions on rearmament, and its hour may come if Western hesitations end by discrediting the Western orientation of present-day Germany.

THE first party to take a stand in the conflict between East and West, at a time in 1945 when almost nobody outside of Germany would admit a conflict existed, was the Social Democratic party. This stand was embodied in its struggle against the threat of fusion with the Communist party—that is to say, its absorption by the latter—a policy imposed by the Soviet authorities in the East and favored in general by the Allied authorities in the West. The center of this struggle was Berlin, where resistance to the demands of the Soviet authorities, masters of the place and the only ruling group having a clearly defined political will, meant risking imprisonment in a concentration camp or sudden death. In back of the Berlin Socialists, many of whom had already known the Nazi camps, there was no authority either German or Allied, but only the West German Socialist party of Schumacher. Without retelling once again the history of the "Battle for Berlin," one can assert that without that little noticed resistance of the Berlin Socialists in 1945-46, which spread slowly to the entire population and to the "bourgeois" parties of Berlin, and whose suppression in the Russian zone only came much later, there would have been no aerial bridge and no free Berlin.

West Berlin is the only incontestable success of democracy in Germany. Its resistance to the new totalitarian repression, the responsibilities and risks which each inhabitant had to assume personally and daily—as, for instance, in the difficult and unpublicized decision of individual Berliners to refuse registration in the Soviet rationing offices at the moment when the blockade was imposed, when West Berlin was practically without coal and food, and when there was not yet

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any guarantee of the desire or ability of the Allies to feed and hold Berlin—ended up by creating a situation where it was morally impossible for the West to abandon that city to Soviet reprisals. Here, for the first time, the Germans were not the objects of military administration but partners whose civic courage counted for as much as the Allied planes. The result is confirmed by all visitors to Berlin: the atmosphere of this "free city," wrecked, poverty-stricken, and isolated, but proud of having defended its liberty, contrasts strangely with the unbreathable atmosphere of Bonn, the artificial capital whose liberties are the result of defeat, imposed by the victors and accepted willy-nilly by the vanquished.

In Berlin, the democratic cause is identified with the national cause—a situation too rare in German history, and *the true prerequisite for all national democratic consciousness.* This outcome has dispelled the bitterness of defeat, the mists of Nazism, and the specters of the Third Reich; Berlin is today the only German city where it is impossible to show Veit Harlan's movies, and where the former "culture-bearers" of the Third Reich cannot return to the stage. And this free city in the center of the Soviet zone has become the secret capital of East Germany; its mere existence prevents the consolidation of the Communist regime, and it acts as a center of resistance where new forms of opposition to a new totalitarian oppression are gradually being worked out, a place of refuge in which there arrive daily hundreds of refugees from the East and whose proximity makes it morally possible for the Germans of the East to continue to hold out against Stalinization. This resistance is not simply "anti-Russian," although the atrocities of the Red Army when it entered Berlin have obviously played an emotionally decisive role; for Ernst Reuter, the admirable Lord Mayor of Berlin, a true militant humanist, former People's Commissar of the USSR in the early period of the Russian Revolution, former professor in Istanbul during the Hitler regime, a citizen of the world who speaks Russian and Turkish as fluently as English, the battle of Berlin is a battle for the liberation, not of Eastern Germany, but of that Europe of which Warsaw and Prague are as much a part as Paris and Rome. Berlin has become a city that gives courage to free men.

For one who has been raised on the old catchwords about the *kadavergehorsam* ("as obedient as a corpse") Prussian, what has happened here must seem miraculous; but it is the catchwords that were false. I was present in Berlin at a lecture by a Frenchman, a man of letters, who gravely expounded the old theme of the fatal Prussian spirit, only to realize suddenly and with inexpressible embarrassment that these people whom he was addressing, and who did not answer at all to his definitions, were the very same Prussians—he had simply not taken into account that this free city where he felt himself so much at ease was none other than the old Prussian metropolis. He might have learned there a healthy skepticism toward the professors of literature and the literature of professors.

If I have written at such length of Berlin, it is because the experience of Berlin can make comprehensible the German point of view that is least understood, or most misunderstood, abroad: that of German Social Democracy. For Kurt Schumacher, it is absolutely necessary to seize this historic occasion when the cause of democracy can at last be fused in the German consciousness with the national cause, when the demand for German unity is a demand for liberty for all Germans, when the rejection of partition means the rejection of a new totalitarian dictatorship imposed on Eastern Germany; it is necessary at all costs not to compromise this cause by a servile collaboration with the Western occupation authorities and to avoid a repetition of the Weimar experience, when German democracy seemed to mean little but submission and impotence. German democracy will be militant, "resistant," or it will not be.

Nationalism? Jacobin nationalism certainly, and certain oratorical excesses of Schu-

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macher are motivated by a very consciously calculated tactical aim: not to let the inevitable fevers and resentments of this wounded country be captured by a new Hitler. This great, frightening-looking cripple who has emerged from Hitler's concentration camps with a broken body, one arm and one leg amputated, who keeps going and active only by the effort of a fanatical will, is a difficult and not very reassuring partner; but Schumacher is nonetheless a true representative of that mutilated and disfigured Germany which is seeking a new road.

From Schumacher's point of view, the Federal Republic of Bonn, that "smaller Germany," is acceptable only as a provisional solution. And every policy which looks to its consolidation, to the acceptance of the partition of Germany as definitive, and which turns its back on the Germans of the East, is a policy of treason, a "policy of Vichy," in the fierce phrase which is heard in Bonn. There again we see the importance of Berlin, that outpost of the West which does not politically form a part of the Republic of Bonn, and whose very existence prevents the definite crystallization of the two separate Germanies; if the presence of that free city in the center of the Soviet zone blocks the consolidation of the Eastern Republic, it also blocks the consolidation of the Republic of Bonn. Berlin prevents the Germans of the West from forgetting that their state is provisional, and that the line of partition can last ten days or ten years, but can never become definitive.

But the policy of Bonn is precisely to consolidate Western Germany. Practically speaking, it has accepted the partition of Germany and the loss of Central and Eastern Germany, if not as definitive, at least as lasting, and even sees in it an opportunity for the entrance of a reduced Western Germany, more acceptable and less frightening to its partners, into a European community with a Franco-German basis. This is, crudely put, the point of view of the Catholic politicians in power—the vision of a "small Germany," Western and Catholic (the loss of the essentially Lutheran Center and East has given the Catholics almost a majority in the Republic of Bonn), integrated into a "small Europe," likewise Western and Catholic. This idea also has its fanatical representative, whose fanaticism, very different from that of Schumacher's, is taciturn, patient, and crafty—none other than Chancellor Adenauer. Despite the verbal concessions which he is compelled to make to public opinion on the theme of German unity, he sees in the "little Germany" of Bonn the great and unique chance for that European unity and above all that Franco-German union which is his genuine obsession. Barricaded behind that article of the constitution which prevents the overthrow of the government by a "negative majority," and which still assures him of a year and a half of power, he perseveres in his policy of European federation, with a fierce will to leave behind him, at the end of those eighteen months, the structure of a solidly built Franco-German Europe which his successors, whoever they may be, will not be able to unmake.

Compared to this grand design, none of the problems which agitate the German press and public opinion really counts for him, neither the Ruhr Statute nor the Occupation Statute nor the conditions of the "formal agreements" with the Allies; all these are merely passing things which will be forgotten the day that "Europe" becomes a reality. He is ready to accept anything that can serve this idea. To win the trade unions for it and play them off against the Socialist opposition, this doughty old bourgeois, raised in the stable and conservative society of the Second Reich before 1914 and reputedly linked to the big heavy industries and the banks, has—over the astonished heads of his conservative ministers—granted the unions "co-determination," the right to equal participation in the control of industry. This "reactionary" would be willing to ratify a Socialist revolution if that could facilitate the realization of European Union.

On the other hand, he fights against anything that might endanger the desperately slow progress of his European policy. De-

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spite some courtesy visits, the defense of Berlin has been of little interest to him; and if, compelled by the force of public opinion, he finally deigned to reply to the "unity proposals" of Grotewohl, he did so in a reticent manner clearly calculated to put an end to that inconvenient discussion. Public opinion? It will come over to his side, he believes, the very day that the idea of Europe passes from the realm of discourse to that of reality. But the Western powers, and above all France, would do well to bethink themselves also of that deadline of 1953; if at the end of Adenauer's mandate his European policy remains stalemated and can only offer the Germans proclamations of good will, that chance will be lost, and, as far as it is humanly possible to foresee, lost permanently. The European enthusiasm of Germany in 1949-50 has frozen up in the face of the delays and the empty slogans of Strasbourg, Adenauer's party is everywhere in retreat, his personal position within the party is challenged more and more, and Germany, if she feels herself rejected by the West, will withdraw to a policy of "Germany alone."

This policy of "Germany alone" is beginning slowly to take form in "neutralist" tendencies, still confused, contradictory, and disorganized, but which in the course of the discussions on German rearmament have attained the force of a tidal wave. There is not one neutralism, but dozens, and all kinds of people are found among them—pacifists and generals (even pacifist generals), Lutheran pastors, industrialists fascinated by the possibilities of the markets of the East, Russian agents, pan-Germans, conscientious objectors, neo-Nazis, sincere idealists, and Machiavellians of every sort. Everything is there, from the profound horror of a new war that could destroy what remains of Germany, from the instinctive refusal to take up arms which might be used against other Germans recruited in the East, from the popular *"ohne mich,"* from the ideal of the peacemaking mission of a Germany reunited and made neutral between the two blocs, to simple blackmail, and the large calculations of power politics. Once disembarrassed of all her occupying powers, a Germany left to herself and having regained her unity could carry on the policy of seesawing between the two blocs, sell herself to the one offering more, play a double game for her own account—in short, start all over again.

The majority of the little groups, "circles," or "movements" which one thinks of as neo-Nazi all profess neutralism—which is by no means to say that all neutralism is "neo-Nazi." It is necessary to be wary of this ill-defined term; inadequately converted old Nazis, or even new ones, can infiltrate everywhere—into the "democratic offensive" of Schumacher or into Adenauer's Europeanism as well as into "neutralism." But not only can they infiltrate, they can also be absorbed. They, as well as the others, are seeking a road for Germany, and the others as well as they can relapse into a militarist nationalism if Germany finds all other ways barred.

All this, so far, is confusion and fever thinly covering a vast depth of apathy that is perhaps the most disquieting characteristic of the physiognomy of German politics. Here, the picture strangely resembles that of France, even in the contradictory fears, even in the wave of "neutralism" too confused to become a positive political force, even in the profound solitude of the pan-European statesmen—Adenauer or Schuman—condemned to maneuver with a public opinion whose apathy merely allows, but does not help at all, the elaboration of a constructive policy. The state of Germany is as disquieting to the Germans themselves as it is to their neighbors; from an untenable status quo, all roads seem to lead toward the unknown.

With these troubled depths in the background, the surface politics of Bonn reduces itself almost to a single combat between two men, Adenauer and Schumacher. Aside from them—and aside from Ernst Reuter, who plays his role apart in a city apart, outside the Federal Republic—there are only subalterns, politicians of the second rank, and parlor prophets. This combat is carried on with that cold hatred of which only men

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are capable who are profoundly convinced of the historical importance of their points of view and of the urgency of seizing the only chance of avoiding new catastrophes.

It is not possible here to follow these two points of view through all their windings; but whoever takes the trouble to understand them will find that positions which are superficially most astounding become logical deductions from a single fundamental idea. Thus for Adenauer, the "European army" is simply one more means, and indeed the most effective means, for the promotion of Franco-German union. For Schumacher, it is one more danger which threatens to make the division of Germany definitive. An additional contrast: to the purely defensive "little Germany" of Adenauer, it matters little that Franco-German military fusion is, for the present, the fusion of two impotences; while Schumacher's "policy of the offensive" obviously seeks support, not from France, but from the United States and the Atlantic coalition. We know that his apparent "no" to the idea of German rearmament was in reality a "yes, but"; yes, but on condition that this rearmament take place behind a curtain of Allied forces concentrated in Germany in such a way as to bar any Russian "preventive intervention," and that the armed force to be built up be conceived in an offensive spirit, i.e., capable, if war ever becomes inevitable, of carrying it beyond not only the Elbe but the Oder. One turns defensively toward the West, the other aggressively toward the East; it is this which has been called the German Janus. But nothing can cause Germany not to have these two faces.

If the preference of the Allies goes to one of these political concepts—that of Adenauer, as it seems—it is urgent to *act* on the consequences of that choice. Germany is again at our disposal, ready to take the road that we open to her; *what is not possible, although it seems to be the secret desire of the Allies, is to bind Germany to the West without binding the West to Germany.* And the little clevernesses which permit us to "gain time" and to put off the day of reckoning will serve only, in the end, to dissipate Europe's last chances.

But it is also well not to deceive ourselves; the opposition between Adenauer and Schumacher is more one of means than of fundamentals. The road of integrating a Western "little Germany" into a Western "little Europe" seems reassuring at first glance, especially in contrast with Schumacher's program. Without offensive purposes, content with the debris of the Europe that remains outside the new Russian empire, it seems to assure the petty tranquillity of the West. But what for Adenauer may appear the final point of his European policy will be its starting point. Once we have gone beyond the "German problem," if we have the imagination and the courage eventually to go beyond it, it will meet us again, transformed into the "European problem." A reestablished Germany, even if she is Western, democratic, and European, will never consent definitively to her own mutilation. Once again, it suffices to look at the map to see that the line of demarcation traced between Frankfort and Weimar will never be an acceptable frontier, as little for a united Europe as for Germany alone. A Europe that would consent to its own definitive mutilation would be just as much damned as a Germany that would lastingly content herself with the Republic of Bonn. European feeling, "European nationalism," to the extent to which it takes shape, will rest on the same bases of bad conscience which we have found in "German nationalism": What hast thou done with thy brother? And this is without doubt why one does not like to look at Germany, that shattered mirror of a disfigured Europe—who likes to look at himself? Once the German screen has vanished, Europe will be face to face with itself.

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WHEN AMERICANS EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL

A Report on Some Latter-Day Pioneers

HAL LEHRMAN

FROM Morocco eastward to India, from Turkish Anatolia southward to Yemen and Aden on the farthest tip of the Arabian peninsula, well over 300,000 so-called "Oriental" Jews have migrated to Israel. In the same three years and eight months since the emergence of the State of Israel, less than 2,000 have come as immigrants from America—and of this handful it is reliably estimated that one out of nearly every two has changed his mind and gone back. In addition, a number of Americans arriving since May 1948 are staying indefinitely in Israel as "tourists," retaining their passports and avoiding immigrant status. But the number cannot be significant, because the total of American citizens resident in Israel, including those who settled during the Mandate, is not much over 3,000.

Little is said about the problems of such Americans, and less written. All attention has centered on absorption of the Oriental deluge. But a very great deal of literature and rhetoric has loudly deplored the arithmetical insignificance of this same American immigration. Indeed, some of the appeals for its increase have seemed so peremptory that many American Jews have found their tempers seriously frayed.

Why this outcry from Israel for American brain and muscle? Is it the natural consequence of a categoric Zionist imperative? To wit: A Jewish state is finally in existence; this state was the goal of Zionism; where, now, are the American Jews who call themselves Zionist? Is it a reflection of the bereavement in the hearts of Israel's Europeans, mourning their millions of Nazi-destroyed dead and seeking replenishment of their Old World stock from the second and third generations in the New? Is it essentially an expression of Israeli concern for the fate of American Jews who do not "return" to Zion while they still can, but who fondly believe that *they* will escape the eventual onslaught from a "congenitally" anti-Semitic world?

But perhaps it may not be ideology or sentiment or altruism at all. Israelis may be moved less by fear of what will possibly happen in the United States than by fear of what will happen in Israel if Americans do not migrate. Why such fear? Because, in the Israeli view, the Orientals are not bringing with them a proportionate amount of the skills and techniques required for building a modern society; settlers of Oriental origin multiply at a much greater rate than settlers of European or Western origin; the reservoirs of immigration from Europe are shrinking at a considerably higher speed than the Oriental sources. If the gap continues to widen, where will the future community of Israel find an adequate elite to replenish its dwin-

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LAST summer, at the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem, there was a terrific row, with the Israelis demanding accusingly of the American delegates: Where are your American Zionists? Why don't they come to Israel? Since that time, these questions have been repeated ever more insistently by Israeli spokesmen—and the quarrel has been continued over here. Perhaps a partial explanation of the furor can be derived from an inquiry into the reasons for Israel's passionate concern with American immigration; and perhaps a partial answer to the Israelis' questions is given by how those Americans fare who *do* go to Israel. HAL LEHRMAN, in preparing this article, interviewed many prominent Israelis and visited the length and breadth of that land, seeking out and talking to American immigrants. Here, from the viewpoint of one who believes that there are no sound reasons why a good number of Americans should not go to Israel if they so desire, and who wishes to assist a process he regards as beneficial both for that young country and the West, he describes how "the Americans" are making out, what their difficulties are, and what could be done to assist them. Mr. Lehrman's new book, *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow*, for which his past articles in COMMENTARY form the basis, has just been published by William Sloane Associates.

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dling supply of social, cultural, economic, and political leadership?

This evaluation of the Oriental capacity for contribution to Israel may be wrong; but it is what Israel's leaders believe. Consequently, the hysteria about *halutziut* (pioneering) becomes more understandable. By the same token, the almost complete indifference of Israelis to the problems encountered by those few Americans who do come to Israel seems all the more remarkable—and shortsighted.

AMERICANS in foreign countries do not give up their national habits and traits more easily than anyone else—not even when they are Zionists, however young and ardent, and when the newly adopted country is the land and the soil they revere as their immemorial "home."

Touring the *kvutzot* (collectives) of Israel recently, this writer lingered a bit longer at three widely dissimilar American settlements: Ein Hashofet, where the first organized group of American pioneers, after years of apprenticeship at Mishmar Haemek and Chadera, set up a permanent establishment among the hills of Ephraim in 1937; Sa'sa in central Galilee near the Lebanese frontier, a radical left-wing socialist kibbutz like Ein Hashofet, but now scarcely three years old; and Gesher Haziv in western Galilee, of the same vintage as Sa'sa but sturdily right-wing socialist and hence poles apart from it in outlook. Yet in all three "Yankee" colonies the dilemmas, the conflicts, and the impediments to complete integration have been substantially the same.

One of the highest Israeli barriers for Americans to climb is Hebrew itself. Acquisition of a foreign language does not come easily to them, as a group. At Ein Hashofet, a mixture of Americans with Poles, the latter learned English faster from the Americans than the Americans caught on to Hebrew. At Gesher Haziv, a combination of Americans with native Palestinians and German refugees who were already several years in Palestine and could speak Hebrew, the language difficulty is still acute after three years—and at Sa'sa, where there has been only a handful of non-Americans from the beginning, Hebrew is regarded with near desperation. When I was there, the American settlers at Sa'sa were impatiently waiting for thirty new settlers—"We don't care who they are or where they're from, so long as they're *not* Americans!"—whose presence would compel the Americans to speak more Hebrew and would help dilute the American flavor of the colony.

As a kind of compensation for their own disadvantage, many American *kibbutzniks* have an iron-clad rule not to speak anything except Hebrew, feeble though theirs may be, to their own children. The second-generation crop of Americans, born in Israel, is imbibing Hebrew from kibbutz teachers; the parentally imposed black-out on English in the family reinforces this educational emphasis (though incidentally also cutting the child off from knowledge of anything else American, a rather Pyrrhic solution). One of the American "elders" at Ein Hashofet told me, with wry pride, that his boy's "worst subject" at school was English!

At Gesher Haziv and Ein Hashofet, national divergences have shaken communal tranquillity over matters ranging from a sense of humor to bad plumbing. (If such clashes have not occurred in Sa'sa, it is simply because its membership has been almost 100 per cent American, and Sa'sa remains the least "Israelified.") Nowadays it is no longer proof of kibbutz virility to disdain sanitation. Every colony would like to have individual showers and commodious living space, and those who can afford them, build them. But Ein Hashofet remembers when the American yearning for real toilet seats, and other congenial apparatus familiar to Brooklyn and Chicago, annoyed and alienated their fellows from Polish villages who thought Zionism had no time for such frivolities.

Taste in food was another mutual mystery, the Americans being ardent exponents of green vegetables and balanced nutrition, an approach unappreciated by Europeans, to whom food was food. Fifteen years or so later the same difficulties cropped up at Gesher Haziv, where a burning issue for a time was toast *vs.* fried bread.

There was wordy debate over child-rearing: the Americans, steeped in Dr. Spock and other modern manuals but short on kibbutz tradition, felt their offspring should have more individual attention, parental care,

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equipment, and affection; the Germans and Palestinians opposed "fussing," loss of adult work-hours, wasting money, and perhaps even spoiling the child. A compromise now allows mothers an extra nursing hour to bathe their infants and will permit three-year-olds and older to sleep under the parental roof instead of in the nursery dormitory —a daring departure from the practice of most kibbutzim. *"Distanz"* was even created by minor differences of manners: the Germans were annoyed by American wise-cracks, flame-colored shirts, and abbreviated feminine attire; the Americans found the others stuffy, unable to take a good-natured ribbing, pained by the American flair for amateur theatricals and comedy skits in which nothing was immune to spoofing. Although there have been some "mixed" marriages at Gesher Haziv, and a working harmony prevails in communal administration, cliques and intimate friendships are still more or less determined by national grouping. At Ein Hashofet, where kibbutz officials are elected without any geographical considerations, the social gap has been entirely bridged—but this took about a decade.

Obviously, many Americans have persevered in their pioneering zeal, and have succeeded in becoming fully integrated; but a significant percentage do quit, some for the cities or less arduous farm communities, others for home. Those who have decided to give up offer such diversified reasons as language difficulties, illness, family pressure to come home, desire to study formally for a college or higher degree, or unabashed homesickness. But the most recurrent cause is fatigue: with the back-breaking toil, with the gap between the kibbutz's poverty and its remote goal of abundance, with the dearth of leisure and of intellectual and artistic facilities (sometimes not even an electric light to read by), with the near impossibility of ever being truly alone in the intensely communal existence. In general, the Europeans say, Americans who abandon the kibbutz life can blame the oversupply of romantic dreams which they brought in their baggage, leaving no room for reality.

It is ironic that the most successful American kibbutzniks are likely to be those whose preparation includes the instilling of intense enthusiasm for one Israeli political faction or other. I say "ironic" because a potential virtue of heavy American immigration could conceivably be the leavening of Israeli factionalism by the American-style, non-political community spirit. Yet American youths who go pioneering in Israel only out of generous devotion to an undiluted Zionist ideal, and without narrower allegiances to a partisan ideology, find themselves at a disadvantage. The country simply isn't organized that way.

Regrettably, dogma is becoming increasingly important in communal living, as is testified by the present widening split between left and right socialists in the kibbutzim. Those Americans who do not come with such awareness and allegiance have a rude awakening: I observed it notably among perplexed pioneers of Haoleh, the halutz movement of the Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America. IZFA laudably indoctrinates love of Zion without party attachments; but its graduates in Israel, when they seek non-Americans of similar independence as partners in a permanent settlement, have extraordinary trouble finding them. The Americans who belong to a faction have it easier.

Thus, at Ein Hashofet, an affiliate of the extreme left-wing Hashomer Hatzair network of colonies, an American spokesman informed me with manifest satisfaction that his fellow Americans had learned from their Polish colleagues over the years that "dilettantism" is not permissible in political science: "Now we are all—Americans and Poles —equally doctrinaire." At Sa'sa, also a Hashomer unit, the Americans may lack adequate Hebrew and remain distinctly American in the tempo and tone of their colony—but they take enormous spiritual comfort from having irrevocably forsaken the American "capitalist" way of life and embraced, not so much Zionism or Israel, as a little corner of Israel and a splinter of Zionism, the socialist collective. On the right side of the socialist fence, too: one need only recall Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett's exhortation to a recent convention of World Habonim, the Mapai-supported kibbutz league, as reported in the Jerusalem *Post*, "to be aware of the political realities of Israel and to range themselves within the framework of the party [Mapai]

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that *alone* could ensure the pioneering and democratic nature of the people."

THE image of the halutz has become a national symbol, and an inspiring one. Yet Israelis admit that it is not hands to break and till the soil that they chiefly seek from an American immigration today. Despite the need for colonists, made even more acute by the food shortage, the emphasis has shifted to knowledge rather than mere energy and brawn, to skills which can organize and direct and teach, rather than be applied to a single furrow. (Youth organizations in English-speaking countries have themselves begun to broaden even the halutz concept to include an *aliyah* [immigration] of non-agricultural specialists.) The Israelis now want capital investors—and, equally, they want technicians, professionals, young men and women of specialized aptitudes who can turn their knowledge to the service of agriculture, the arts and sciences, the mills and factories, the economy, the civil service.

There exists in the agricultural sphere a time-tested structure of agencies—governmental, quasi-governmental, public, and private—to aid settlers, including Americans. In support of the national economy the Israeli Treasury, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Investment Center, and numerous other institutions devote themselves, with varying effect, to integrating immigrant American capital and capitalists.* What, however, are the aids and facilities available for the absorption of Americans who bring to Israel, not a bundle of money or a vocation for the plough, but the general attributes of an American background and, usually, the particular assets of a specialized education in some technique potentially valuable for Israel?

In general, these aids and facilities have been slow in developing and are still strikingly inadequate. English-speaking branches of the various Israeli political parties did very little about their clients except solicit their allegiance. The Aliyah departments of organizations like Histadrut or WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization) made no particular effort to aid and comfort newcomers from the West. Nor did the Jewish Agency, responsible for reception and integration of *all* immigrants, have any special branch for English-speaking ones until the summer of 1951, when an "Anglo-Saxon Section" was established in the Absorption Department with an unpaid director who admirably discharges his salaried duties as Israel representative of the British Zionist Federation, but has little time left over for immigrants from other Western countries—and has no personal knowledge of the United States. This Agency unit ostensibly busies itself with promoting Western immigration and finding homes, jobs, and other "absorption" necessities for those who come. But during two months in Israel last Fall I searched vainly for its chief in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv—he was occupied part of the time with his annual one-month service in the army reserves, and seemed to be just plain lost the rest of the time.

More productive work, comparatively, is being done by PATWA (Professional and Technical Workers' Aliyah), begun in England during the later years of the Mandate and now headed in Israel by an American as an adjunct of the World Zionist Organization's Youth and Hehalutz Department. PATWA has obtained its most satisfactory results in the handling of British immigrants: a systematic attempt is made to assess the candidate's background, preferences, and abilities, and then to match them with a suitable job vacancy; where desired, PATWA encourages a preliminary visit by the potential immigrant to inspect the situation, make up his mind, and begin advance arrangements for housing and other essentials. Nothing as thorough as this yet exists for Americans, for whom PATWA has been useful in a number of individual cases of job location but generally only after the American has arrived in Israel completely on his own. Only now is the possibility of an effective PATWA branch in the United States being explored with some faint hope of realization.

Meanwhile the inability of the existing apparatus to meet even the government's own need for experts led to a cabinet decision in January 1951 to establish a Division of Professional and Technical Personnel under the Department of Scientific and

* For an appraisal of the foreign capital investment problem in Israel, see the author's articles in the March and May 1951 issues of COMMENTARY.

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Technical Development in the Prime Minister's office. This unit, headed by Brigadier-General Yacob Dori, former chief of staff, has only a slender personal liaison with PATWA through the latter's director, who works for the General one or two days each week. Otherwise, the potentialities for close parallel collaboration between the two bureaus are far from realized. Last August a branch of the Dori office began functioning in the New York consulate, for the entire Western Hemisphere. To date it has received over 250 job applications; scarcely one-tenth that number of jobs have been filled, mainly because of difficulties in Israel —some necessary, many unnecessary.

LARGELY absent, furthermore, is any scientific approach to employment needs in Israel, particularly in the government service. Insufficient attention has been given to job analysis and description—to determining precisely the kinds of positions open, the functions and duties of such positions, and the exact qualifications needed to perform them. There is, for instance, a serious dearth of trained economists. But there are also, obviously, many varieties of economic specialization, and different economic operations call for different specialists. Choosing the wrong one is a waste of talent and time.

The recent formulation of civil service standards and tests should secure a better brand of government servant than the previous anarchy of selection by personal decision of a superior official. But assignment of such qualified personnel—including Americans—to the posts where they are best fitted and most needed must await a thorough survey of actual needs. Thanks to pressure from American personnel experts, some small progress in this field has lately been made.

Meanwhile, department and bureau chiefs continue pleading for more staff. There is a natural "empire-building" tendency in government services everywhere. Nor is it only in Israel that one finds an inclination among chiefs to avoid the hiring of top-rank experts, who might provide competition, and to seek junior officials instead. But, of course, Israel can afford it less. An inside observer of Israeli bureaucracy assured me sadly: "If you're a foreign expert past forty, you're not likely to find the job you deserve unless you're so famous you can get invited just to make a survey, on a V.I.P. basis, write a report, and go home with drums and bugles after a decent interval. Otherwise you have to be young enough, and safe enough, to be hired by a man who knows he'll never learn as much as you know already."

Again as in other countries and institutions, brilliance or superior knowledge is no undiluted asset in a youthful newcomer's bid for Israeli advancement. A very competent young specialist in public-opinion survey and analysis, who gave up an already recognized status in his field at home to go to Israel because of Zionist conviction (he also spoke Hebrew well), could not find his niche in government employ and is now struggling, with inadequate financial support and limited recognition, to win acceptance for techniques which could contribute much to Israel but are too new to be appreciated there. The American creator and director of a model nursery school, which excited country-wide enthusiasm among Israeli teachers, was badgered by top educational brass until she was compelled to retire from her project, its expensive modern equipment —contributed by American sponsors—falling into misuse as the school lapsed back to old-line methods. Professional jealousies—and resistance to "upstarts" and "newfangled ideas"—impede the effectiveness of competent personnel in Israel as elsewhere, except that Israel's need for such competence is greater. Even the findings of visiting authorities are too frequently filed and forgotten after the visitors have gone away. Finally, because an official is otherwise occupied or does not quite understand the jobs for which new specialists were hired, it is not unusual for the latter to endure long stretches of inaction before even being noticed at their new desks and assigned to urgent tasks. There are, among others, the instances of an expert in aviation medicine and a highly qualified agricultural research director who received agreeable titles and office space but were thereafter ignored.

It goes without saying that not every discontented or poorly employed American in Israel is an abused genius. Among the immigrants, inevitably, there are some who are mediocre and others who might be unfortunate misfits anywhere. Nor should it be

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imagined that Israel is a bleak desert of frustration without oases of fulfillment. Many Israeli officials give prompt and generous opportunity to qualified newcomers, and many Americans are rendering fruitful and distinguished service. An American army staff sergeant with experience in personnel rose to be chief of the manpower branch of the Israeli air force, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel; a young American aviation engineer became a full colonel directing the air force's training command. Newly arrived Americans hold such important positions as assistant to the director of the soil conservation program, chief of the forecasting section of the meteorological service, and originator and supervisor of the new system of standards and examinations for the civil service.

In fact, there are golden opportunities in Israel for the wideawake, and little serious competition. If he possesses the ability and brings it to the right address, the young "expert" may find himself catapulted into a post of responsibility far exceeding anything he might have hoped for in the United States. Thus a lad of twenty-six is the deputy director of the sanitation department in the Israeli Health Ministry; in America he would probably still be serving his apprenticeship in some municipal agency or plumbing factory. But one may be pardoned for hoping for methods and procedures which would distribute opportunities so as to make them steadily available to the largest possible number rather than leaving them, as at present, to happy accident or individual good luck.

Perhaps the average American immigrant should be content with the corrugated-tin hut or primitive cement pillbox which houses the average Iraqi or Yemenite immigrant. The point is that the American will not. And Israeli measures to provide the simplest housing accommodations reminiscent of Western standards at reasonable cost have been pathetically limited.

Even for government personnel from abroad, PATWA has been unable by negotiation with the Labor Ministry to wangle an allocation of 200 apartments, conservatively estimated as minimally required over the next two years, in a massive special *shikun* (housing project) under construction for Israeli civil servants. One Jerusalem project available to Americans is without electricity and offers just a little more than a single narrow room per family. It is possible to make a deal sometimes with a private contractor, or with the Jewish Agency affiliate, Rassco, and get a fairly good flat built for around $7,000 by paying in hard currency if the immigrant happens to have such funds outside Israel. Some "Anglo-Saxon" groups —notably South African—have formed housing combines to import their own building materials. But individuals unable to fit into such arrangements may have to pay 5,000 Israeli pounds in "key money" even before moving into a vacated flat, or else be dependent on such inadequate schemes, actual or under discussion, as the projects of Amidar, the government-Jewish Agency public housing corporation, for blocks of ultra-spartan two-room flats in the middle of dismal wastes.

After all, despite the widespread Israeli belief, few American immigrants are sons of millionaires. The typical young Zionist is rich only in ideals and enthusiasms, and has not been earning a living long enough to have accumulated any substantial funds. Nor is his family capable of giving much help (often it is opposed altogether to his going). He is not likely, either, to save much from his Israeli salary for an apartment or home, particularly if it is a government salary. Americans in upper government brackets scarcely earn I£ 100 monthly in take-home pay after taxes, dues, and assessments. Such pay makes for hard living even when computed at the official rate of $2.80 to the pound, a rate which is highly imaginative. Unlike their Israeli colleagues, most Americans were not around in the years of the Mandate, when housing was cheap. Their salaries scarcely permit the accumulation of nest-eggs. What Israel needs and sorely lacks is a mortgage loan fund or credit system which could give such immigrants a first leg up toward the achievement of a livable existence—and some low-cost housing at moderate rental instead of outright purchase.

One could argue that Americans should not ask "special treatment" from a country which is enduring economic crisis and has vaster immigration problems. Kibbutz life means a kind of dedication, in which sacrifice and physical discomfort are almost ritual-

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istic elements, and where the rigors of pioneer society are equally shared by all communicants. But the rigors of bad housing in Tel Aviv and other cities are not equally shared, and American pioneers there have not generally had the same spiritual preparation as their kinsmen who survive on the land. For the latter, the kibbutz itself is their career; for Americans in the cities, their work and their families—actual or hoped for—are the career, and they are seriously hampered in its pursuit if living conditions are intolerable. (At a level of enlightenment far above that of the routine governmental attitude, the New York consular office seeking Americans for the civil service refuses even to sign a man on unless specific and acceptable housing in Israel is first guaranteed for him.)

But perhaps the needed extra effort on behalf of Americans is not possible for exclusively official Israeli bodies, which might feel they could not single out a particular group of immigrants for preferred treatment. But there ought to be enough ingenuity in Jewry to devise some ethically justified procedure. I recall the case of several American technical-school graduates, with wives and small children, who built the frame of a modest factory in Israel, lived in it like gypsies while vainly awaiting assignment to housing more habitable than crude cold-water, two-room flats, and finally—for the sake of the children—abandoned the factory and went home. On the balance sheet of the future Israel, was the country better served by letting such good human material go and such a potentially valuable economic venture collapse for the amount of building material saved?

STILL assuming—on the strength of vehement Israeli assurances—that Americans are more urgently desired than, let us say, Persians, can it not be cogently maintained that Americans are also different in their motivations from most immigrants? For the great majority of East European and Oriental immigrants, Israel is a refuge. In many instances, but by no means all, present-day Israel affords a somewhat lower physical standard of living—but in all cases it gives them a superior spiritual standard because their status in the countries of origin was more or less intolerable. The contrary is true of the Americans. They leave the United States of their own free will, and they forsake a physical standard of living which is the world's highest.

To an American the concept of being an immigrant is in itself repugnant, as something perhaps associated with his own parents or grandparents but certainly not with him, a native American. He may even feel he has performed an act of self-abnegation by coming to Israel at all. This may not be a proper attitude, but it is a fact. He arrives with a store of idealism—but the supply has limits. It is buffeted by the shock of comparing actuality in Israel—physical and moral—with the dream; by the frustrations of foreign language and custom; by the tremendous emotional wrench suffered when, through voting in Israeli elections or serving in the Israeli defense forces, he jeopardizes his American citizenship; by the difficulties in employment, housing, food, in care for his children.

Even more than the young American, the young American's wife is exposed to strain. It is she who must do daily combat with the realities of the queues outside the foodshops. The husband has intervals of escape in his work and with his colleagues; the wife is confronted with the struggle for existence in every waking hour. I know of more than one instance where the husband came to Israel because the wife was a Zionist; and now it is he who is imploring her to hang on, and she whose idealism is spent.

And, ultimately, there is the one supreme difference between Americans and most others at the moment of final decision: the American has a road back. His bridges are not totally burned. He can "return" if things are too tough, and too often that is exactly what he does.

Some of this may be glimpsed by Israeli policy-makers, but they invariably think of immigrants in terms of masses and camps, not of individuals and homes. The brute fact is that the Israeli authorities lack the mechanisms, the perception, and the patience to give the American immigrant the understanding treatment which he should receive—if only for the sake of Israel's reconstruction, not to speak of her public relations with the American manpower reservoir.

THIS is perhaps most glaringly obvious at the moment of the American's arrival. Apparently Israel has immigrant reception

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facilities only for crowds, and for these the techniques have been polished to mechanical precision. A boatload of Rumanians, a planeful of Iraqis, 40,000 Yemenites—no problem at all. Pack them into trucks, roll them to the Shaar Aliyah south of Haifa for processing, then on to transient camp or work camp, and from there in due course to the permanent settlements. Americans do not come in crowds. Even if they did, they could not be treated that way. So the American steps onto the dock at Haifa as an immigrant, and he is not treated at all. There is no official advance notification of his arrival. He goes it alone—through the interminable formalities and inefficiencies of extricating his baggage from the hold of the ship and his person from the hold of officials. Once liberated, he is still on his own, even for the locating of initial shelter. He probably goes to a hotel and pays tourist prices, considerably more than an immigrant should pay. He has to find out for himself—in a strange land and language—where to apply for information about permanent housing and work, neither of which, as we have seen, is easy to obtain. If he has no friends or relatives waiting—and especially if he also has a wife and family to protect—one can imagine the joy in his heart.

Recently, at a Haifa immigrant camp known as Bat Galim, special facilities were at last arranged for "Anglo-Saxons." One can only say for these accommodations that they are not as bad as the tents and tin shanties customarily reserved for immigrants. The East European director, who obviously took great pride in the project, led me into a place distinguished for the fact that it was indeed a building, and of stone. Several stories of single rooms—one whole room for a family, not two families, as among the Orientals! A real, separate toilet for each floor! The place, with its congestion, the trunks and bundles in the corridors, the squalor and depression, reminded me cruelly and even unfavorably of the bleak buildings requisitioned as refugee centers which I had seen in occupied Germany and Austria soon after the war.

All the "Anglo-Saxon" families except three were English or from the Dominions. Of the Americans, one was a young widow with two small children: she had just found a post as seamstress in a kibbutz, "where the kids will at least be okay"; a couple with one child, returning to the States after their year in Israel ("but we'll be back; we just want to earn enough to bring over the things we can't get here"); the third a younger couple, no child, the husband working in a bank at some trivial job which he had obtained after aimless months, furious over Israeli indifference, rudeness, political favoritism. The American rooms, like the others, a jungle of baggage, looking and smelling like those 1900 photographs of Ellis Island. And even this is not made accessible to the American immigrant as a matter of routine. He is told nothing about it at the Israeli consulates where he gets his visa, or at Haifa or Lydda when he inquires about lodgings. He must first search elsewhere, grow increasingly despondent, discover the "Absorption Department" of the Jewish Agency, which will send him to the "Anglo-Saxon Section," and there, finally, they will share with him the news that Bat Galim exists. . . .

IT HAS been stated above that "nobody" receives the American immigrant at the dock. This is not quite true, at least it has not been for some months. Late in 1950 a group of Americans in Israel, aghast at the total absence of official solicitude, began painfully to organize Hitachdut Olei America—"Association of American Immigrants." About a year later, a Haifa branch inaugurated a voluntary reception service in that port: a loudspeaker announces the organization's existence to any Americans (and Canadians) who might chance to be arriving; if any respond they are helped through the official maze of debarkation; temporary quarters are obtained for them; a welcoming committee shows them the sights of the cities, entertains them modestly, and gives them a short orientation course on how to begin trying to get permanently settled. If the American happens to be a technician in whom the government may be interested, the Haifa group even has authority to welcome him "officially" in the name of the Prime Minister's office. An arrangement with Gesher Haziv permits American wives and children to board at that kibbutz while the husbands shop around for flats. Tel Aviv and Jerusalem affiliates of Hitachdut offer a variety of free aids: lists of cheap furnished rooms, a

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file of miscellaneous job openings, liaison with PATWA for circulation of technicians' applications among interested agencies, grants of small loans, social contacts with other Americans and Israelis for lonely Sabbath evenings, advice on housing, Hebrew lessons in the *ulpanim* (language schools), military service, and exemptions for United States army veterans. Hitachdut is promoting a scheme for colonies of prefabricated three-room homes which will not be jammed together in the usual barracks style of immigrant settlement; it also advocates housing on a rental as well as purchase basis.

All this represents a sturdy step in the right direction. But Hitachdut, characteristically, is financially impoverished and receives little cooperation from the authorities. It claims a membership of about 350, single members paying dues of I£ 3, couples I£ 4 annually. As of last September, the last time I was able to make direct inquiry, its only other significant source of income seemed to be a I£ 100 monthly subvention from Histadrut, the trade union federation. At "national headquarters" in Tel Aviv, an empty shop on the street floor of an office building, the full-time executive director was wondering how long he could last without salary.

Since then the organization has somehow managed to endure, probably mostly on enthusiasm, even holding a two-day "National Conference" in Jerusalem during November, with 29 delegates attending. A conference summary reports with pride that the Jerusalem members "have even succeeded in securing an apartment for one family." Here and there impatience is registered over failure to inject into official bodies any sense of urgency; one resolution expressly records dissatisfaction with the Jewish National Fund in connection with the Hitachdut project for prefabricated housing—although the granting of land tracts has been formally approved, Hitachdut does not yet have an allocation of specific plots from the JNF despite a half year of negotiation.

One might legitimately ask why a group of predominantly young and not very affluent American immigrants has been left to carry the main burden of implementing an aid program for their more recently arrived countrymen. Where are the numerous vigorously pro-Israeli organizations in the United States, especially those that constantly extol the virtues of *halutziut*? The South African Zionist movement did excellent work in settling veterans from that Dominion after the Arab war, whereas many American ex-soldier volunteers, dependent almost entirely on the insufficient services of an Israeli Resettlement Office, were unable to make ends meet and had to go home. The South African Zionists, despite violent political disagreements, cooperate on common tasks for the betterment of Israel—while no such cooperation is apparent in America.

At one time Hitachdut asked help from the Zionist Organization of America, but without success, possibly because of suspicion that the Israeli group—or some of its leading spirits—had ideological links with Histadrut and Mapai, neither of which is noticeably fond of the ZOA. Currently Hitachdut, insisting that it is totally non-partisan (but also correctly urging its membership to participate fully in community and civic affairs as individuals), is seeking recognition as official representative of Americans in Israel from all American Zionist bodies here. Also, though concrete action cannot be recorded, various sub-committees of the Jewish Agency's American Section have been earnestly discussing the problems of the American immigrants—with almost everybody agreeing that something must be done.

Since the successful contribution of American talent to Israel is a non-partisan objective, might it not be a good idea for non-partisan organizations in this country to enter the field? Participation of a strictly social-welfare American group would avoid the hazards likely to be encountered by political elements. Such a non-partisan organization might, to begin with, come to the financial rescue of Hitachdut (or, if that group were still considered too intimate with a particular Israeli political faction, a new office could be established with similar ends). The welfare agency could also investigate ways of making better housing available, either by creating easy mortgage credit or building low-cost housing, or both.

An American organization like the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, to cite one possibility, would be well suited for such activities. HIAS has more than a

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half-century's experience in the reception and care of immigrants. In New York City it maintains a large and efficient immigrant hostel. In Israel it operates a revolving loan fund for the economic integration of new Israelis and, in partnership with three local groups, a chain of 36 shelters for unmarried immigrants. If HIAS can do this for East Europeans and Orientals, why not let it also do something for Americans? The construction of a "HIAS American House" at Haifa would promptly remove the existing desperate uncertainties inflicted on the new American settler arriving there. One or two other modest establishments for longer-term occupancy, strategically situated in the main urban centers, would greatly alleviate the American housing crisis.

Would the American organization sponsoring such a program arouse the resentment of its own contributors in view of the current controversy about *halutziut*? I think not. Except for the extremist fringe, few American Jews object to Israel's receiving a reasonable number of qualified young American technicians, some permanently, others for limited contractual periods. What is resented is the manner in which Israel has been seeking to incite this immigration. On the contrary, the idea itself of larger participation in Israel's development by young Americans has wide popular appeal in this country; and even if it ceased to have, a certain number of Americans would still continue to go.

ONE of the first young American immigrants I interviewed in Israel told me—and it was only at the end of my visit that I realized how completely he had summed up the problem: "You have to remind yourself out loud ten times a day why you came here. It's a bit of a strain on your supply of Zionist idealism, or your spirit of adventure, or whatever made you leave home in the first place. We're still living out of the trunkful of clothing we brought. Pretty soon you stop pressing your pants and shining your shoes. Your boss doesn't care. *He* comes to work in shorts. After a while you stop caring too. But it takes a lot longer to get used to the idea of being an immigrant. You sound comical to yourself in pidgin Hebrew, you get mad at local customs and manners, you feel shut out by the 'Mayflower' boys who were born here or arrived long before the State. Then, there's no decent low-cost housing, no way to save up for the fantastic prices of what they call 'luxury' housing, and sometimes no job—or just a job that holds you down to polishing apples under a chief who got there only by belonging to the right party. What's worse, nobody seems to give a damn about you. All kinds of fuss over Yemenites, but no agency or outfit to help Americans. For my wife and me it's been a little easier not having children. A lot of fellows come over all on fire, but when they see there's no place to live they cool off and go home. Not much is done to keep them. And that is really a crime. Because if you hang on long enough, somehow you get settled. Maybe it's a couple of 'uncles' in America, or maybe you simply adjust on your own. You manage to find some sort of acceptable housing, and you get the right job in the end, or maneuver around in the one you have. Then all of a sudden things become clear. You see you're really contributing something, you're growing up with a brand-new country and actually helping to shape its direction. And that, *chaver*, is a wonderful feeling. But what a lot of wasted time, and what frustrations and headaches—and how many times you're at the point of pulling up and getting out—and a lot of good fellows have. . . ."

Some weeks later, in the Naftali hills of Upper Galilee, I met a young man from Los Angeles serving cheerfully in an isolated border police patrol. When I asked him what he wanted most, he replied: "More Americans." He did not mean that he was homesick or lonely. He meant that the expanding people of Israel, with their variegated social and cultural origins, their great influx of immigrants from lands where freedom and civic generosity are alien concepts, needed an infusion of the American spirit. Israel, he meant, needs lessons not merely in technics but in give and take, in community feeling, in individual dignity, in human equality—in short, in democracy. This is another brand of "know-how," rarely mentioned, which Americans can bring. Any policy or program which aids the effective incorporation of such ingredients into the fiber of the youthful state will win high endorsement from all true friends of Israel and of American Jewry.

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METATHALAMIUM

HOWARD O. SACKLER

EVEN as this latest weakening snow
Sifts the morning darkness,
Adding another livid lid to walks and
gables,
The many-footed phantoms are already
about.

Winter has mothered them
And we have sired with stubborn appetite;
They move without now, setting
Their tantalizing footprints along the
snow,
In our usual paths.

How we have sinned in this anxious year:
Wedding with the 'barren' season
Who brought us dread increase,
Lashing our gnomish joys to smaller caves,
Tending our kindness with the humpbacked
questions,
Gagging our charity with a little ice.

The true horned gate is not below
But everywhere with us, at each man's
doorway;

Soon some will pass through to the waiting
snow,
(That even now is gentle at the window)
And exclaim:

What tracks are these?
And those that vanish at the threshold?
And there, so faintly pressed?
And here, and here?
Save us, who shall save us from
these ghosts;
How long shall the river stay smooth
and cold
That always burst long before this
And swept the sweating edges with its
waking?

And others will roam
Their strangely stepped dooryards,
Like impounded wolves
Gnawing at the frozen despair of their
neighbors:

At what time? When?
And who has seen?

And the wise men,
Our counsellors
Of the frozen viscera,
Will keep indoors;
Their sleet-dyed faces will turn from the
glass,
And each will bloody his own cheeks
To conjure shame for all the vows
That we have made with Winter,

Then pray in stealth that Heaven may
become
Interested, at least, in this,
Our chilly pact. And they will pray:

The oldest bargain is dissolved,
O Lord,
For yesterday we saw new tracks
Of a crutch that rode hard in the snow
And a split hoofprint that was slow
behind,
And this sad trail has likewise
disappeared
In the lap of our wilful bride.

Deliver us from Winter and our
phantoms,
Deliver him who has lost his way.

And now as the heavier flakes
Come beating at the houses,
Her brutal ring of icy wedlock
Around the heart tightens again;
Even the most cheerful, who wear
stocking-caps,
Will weary of it today,
They will burn their sleds in the snow
And look into the pyre without speaking.

HOWARD O. SACKLER has had poetry in *Accent* and the *Hudson Review*; his poem "E. A. Poe" appeared in the November 1950 COMMENTARY. Mr. Sackler was born in New York City in 1929.

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JUST HOW BAD IS CONGRESS?

A Balance Sheet as of 1952

ROBERT BENDINER

WHEN President Truman went through the country four years ago denouncing the "do-nothing, good-for-nothing 80th Congress," he was hardly setting a fresh pattern for a country in which Congress-baiting is a venerated pastime, going back to the dawn of the Republic and open to everyone from the Chief Executive down. Theodore Roosevelt habitually tried to by-pass the Senate as "a helpless body when efficient work for good is to be done." Wilson died embittered by that same "little group of willful men." As Jonathan Daniels has pointed out in his biography of Truman, the very phrase "do-nothing Congress" was borrowed by the President from his fellow Missourian Champ Clark, who applied it to the 54th Congress, of the Gay 90's. And a member of the Grant cabinet used a figure peculiarly inappropriate for a spokesman of that corrupt administration. "You can't use tact with a Congressman," he explained to a questioner. "You must take a stick and hit him on the snout."

Yet before Truman, no president had ever waged an election campaign quite so concentrated on the derelictions of Congress. Justified as this writer happens to think the President was, he undoubtedly furthered a trend which, viewed against the backdrop of the day's ideological warfare, has risky implications. At a moment when parliamentary institutions are under worldwide attack, when the whole democratic process is being systematically derided from Moscow, it is unfortunate, to say the least, that the Congress of the United States finds itself more and more on the defensive here at home, whatever the degree of its own responsibility.

Following the Republican "no-good 80th Congress," we had what some labor leaders called the "Eighty-worst Congress" because it failed to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, and now we hear the 82nd described at a CIO Rubber Workers' Convention as "the worst in the history of the country." Even the journal of the temperate Americans for Democratic Action remarks that the first session of this Congress did "not match the mediocrity of the Republican-dominated Eightieth, but history will report the try as a near miss." To democrats elsewhere in the world it might well appear, discouragingly, that our legislative branch is deteriorating fast, even if they don't consult such irreverent works as *The Truman Merry-Go-Round*, by Robert S. Allen and William V. Shannon, in which Representatives are discussed in all seriousness in a chapter headed "The Monkey House," while Senators, as a class, are referred to as "The Higher Primates."

Actually the criticisms of Congress, warranted and unwarranted alike, are almost

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CONGRESS is in session again, proponents and opponents of sundry legislation are maneuvering for position, pre-election eloquence floods the nation's ears—and not a few citizens turn uneasily away to tend their private gardens. For there is an opinion abroad in the land to the effect that Congress is not what it used to be, that it is bumbling, obstructive, and stupid where it was once constructive, efficient, and statesmanlike. And there are not lacking, either here or overseas, tendentious observers who are happy to echo and exploit this opinion as offering further testimony to the decay and ineptitude of representative democracy itself. ROBERT BENDINER investigates to what extent this opinion fits the realities of the situation—and finds a surprisingly large incongruence. Mr. Bendiner, formerly associate editor of the *Nation*, is the author of *The Riddle of the State Department* (1942). His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Has the American Voter Swung Right?" in the January 1951 issue.

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never intended as attacks on that body as an institution. Usually, and naturally, they are partisan blasts, directed by Republicans at the Democratic majority or vice versa, or by Northern Democrats at the so-called Republican-Dixiecrat coalition. Sometimes they are charges hurled at a particular Congress as a whole by an economic group or special-interest bloc which has failed to get what it wants. Occasionally they are criticisms of specific practices fostered by one chamber or the other over the years—filibustering in the Senate, for example, or over-concentration of power in the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives, or abuse of the immunity privilege in both houses. Still, these complaints, no matter what their merit, are rarely designed to weaken the system of checks and balances, much less bring the whole scheme of representative government into disrepute.

Yet carried too far, or misinterpreted, that can well be their effect, and for this Congressmen themselves are not without blame. There are always legislators who are ready to impute a destructive motive to their critics, equating attacks on themselves with hostility to the institution of Congress as such. Some even regard, or profess to regard, the growing practice of publicizing their voting records as somehow subversive. Others treat every attempt to curb the abuses committed by investigating committees as a blow at the foundations of government. Senator Robert A. Taft, typically, chose to interpret Truman's famous "non-political" trip in the spring of 1948 as an arraignment, not of the 80th Congress, but of the legislative system. "Our gallivanting President," he declared, "is blackguarding Congress at every whistle-stop in the West. . . . There is little use in keeping Congress in session while President Truman is delivering an attack on the principles of representative government itself."

For the most part we know how to discount this sort of by-play, though our friends abroad cannot be expected to. But even here at home it is becoming increasingly hard, in the fog of charge and countercharge, to maintain a fair perspective. Is it true that Congress as a branch of government has declined in comparison with the executive? If so, is its decline more than a passing phase in the historic tug of war between two frequently competitive branches of government?

THE spell cast by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy over the 81st and 82nd Congresses; the fear of the effect of his recklessness on their constituents, which for a time all but paralyzed the decent instincts of his colleagues; the extraordinarily low level of operations by Senators like Jenner of Indiana, Butler of Maryland, and others, all sustain the belief that, ideology aside, Congress has indeed slipped into dangerously disreputable ways. That belief was not weakened when both McCarthy and Jenner were allowed to go unrebuked for violent assaults on General Marshall's loyalty, assaults that would almost certainly have landed them before the bench had they not been protected by Congressional immunity. Perhaps the greatest shock of all came when the eminently respectable Senator Taft encouraged McCarthy to keep flinging unsubstantiated charges at State Department personnel until he found some that could be made to stick.

Taft's unwillingness to repudiate McCarthy—the furthest he ever went was to intimate that "Jumping Joe" had jumped too hard on General Marshall—and his bewildering, rapid-fire contradictions in the field of foreign policy, have left the Republicans vulnerable to the charge of irresponsible opposition in the Senate. And the truculent provincialism of their late floor leader, Kenneth S. Wherry, added substantially to the indictment. Nor have matters been better on the Democratic side of the aisle, where Senator McFarland, the present majority leader, and his predecessor, Senator Lucas, have made Democrats long for the good old days when smooth, able quarterbacks like Alben Barkley and James F. Byrnes carried the ball for the administration. Lucas was so inept and so indifferent to the program he was supposedly promoting that when he

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was defeated for reelection in 1950, many Democrats openly took comfort in the prospect that their party might at least salvage a better Senatorial floor leader out of the elections. The general feeling now is that McFarland has turned out to be an advance in amiability, and not much else.

Going beyond the official leadership, critics of Congress are fond of pointing out the strikingly depressing replacements that have occurred, particularly in the Senate, over the past decade. Little men like Zales Ecton of Montana, Henry Dworshak of Idaho, and Arthur Watkins of Utah, all pliant, provincial party hacks without the breath of a new idea, sit in the seats once occupied by Tom Walsh, William E. Borah, and the scholarly Elbert Thomas. It has been especially painful for liberals to think of giants like the La Follettes giving way to McCarthy, or of Norris supplanted by Wherry, the "fundamentalist Republican," as he called himself.

It is not on these generalizations, however, that the case against the last three Congresses is built, but rather on the legislative record. Alistair Cooke, American correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian,* wonders "how Mr. Truman manages to maintain any reputation at all in such a vacuum of inaction." Pointing out that Truman was elected as the symbol of the voters' resentment of the sluggish 80th Congress, he writes that "the two succeeding Congresses have done even less about the things Mr. Truman was supposed to stand for."

Mr. Cooke, like most other critics of a liberal cast of mind, reels off an impressive list of sins of omission. The President won in 1948 in spite of the South, but Congress has yet to move on the civil rights program proposed by him four years ago. No real dent has been made in the Taft-Hartley Act, which was to have been appreciably modified. The Brannan farm plan is still in a pigeonhole and likely to stay there. Compulsory health insurance is hardly more than a campaign memory. Because the Southerners fear the possibility that four additional Senators might destroy their balance of power, Alaska and Hawaii are still territories in spite of the promises of both parties to make them states. And the program for reforming the sprawling executive branch of the government remains in the blueprint stage where the Hoover Commission left it.

All these counts are unarguable, and are rendered even more unpalatable by the manner in which some of the few positive steps were taken. The four months of squabbling, bickering, bad-tempered procrastination before wheat was voted for famine-threatened India canceled out whatever diplomatic good will might have been won by the gesture. The wrangle over sending troops to Europe at the earnest request of the President and General Eisenhower awakened in Europeans the old suspicion that whatever an American administration may say or promise can be undone at the critical moment by a recalcitrant Congress. Taxation and the Defense Production Act both fell woefully short of meeting the acute dangers of inflation. In addition, there was the usual quota of nonsensical moves, such as Senator Kem's to cripple our allies unless they stopped all trade, however innocent, between themselves and the Iron Curtain countries. Funds were forthcoming for Western Europe, but reduced to the point where the New York *Times* commented that "Congress showed an alarming tendency to underrate the need for bolstering Europe's civilian economy to support the present military effort."

So runs the indictment. Serious, certainly, but it would be rash to conclude that Congress is actually a waning force, or that representative government as such has suffered a grave setback. There are too many mitigating circumstances, as well as downright contradictions, for such a verdict to be sustained.

Beneath the emotionalism that marks the political exchanges of the day there lies, to begin with, a genuine and universal bewilderment in the face of the future. Congress merely reflects this. Far from not being representative enough, the national legisla-

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ture is, in this sense at least, all too representative of a nation suffering from conflicting drives. The country ardently wants peace, yet it wants just as ardently to end the threat of Russian expansion and to check the spread of Communism. It still hankers after the old freedom from foreign "entanglements," yet it somewhat proudly accepts its inevitable role as the Number One Power of the non-Communist world. It wants to go on fulfilling the American dream of an ever rising standard of living, yet it wants also to be fully prepared for military operations of staggering cost. In a narrower sense it wants "free enterprise" and what Harding called "normalcy," yet no single special-interest group is ready to yield a fraction of what it has gained from government intervention since 1933. Moreover, as always, the minority party, by now desperate for the taste of victory, wants both to strengthen the nation in the face of Soviet challenge and yet harass its government at every turn for the sake of political advantage. That, too, is standard practice.

IT IS no wonder that on a score of issues Congress faces two ways at once. Neither is it to be wondered at that, with great changes sweeping over the world, with historic decisions to be made, members of Congress should put off those decisions as long as possible, should temporize and compromise, and channel most of their energies into the field of inquiry and investigation. On this score the first session of the 82nd Congress broke all records, with more than one hundred and thirty "special investigations"—that is, probes not connected with pending legislation.

Some of these investigations were irresponsibly conducted, and obviously conceived by individuals who had their own political fortunes exclusively in mind. Others were calculated to use the abhorrence of Communism as a stick with which to beat the administration and block its program. Still others were simply devices for marking time. But there was far more to the trend than this. Apart from the necessary airing of corruption in certain agencies, particularly the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, at least five of the investigations were basic in nature and of lasting importance.

No Congress can be brusquely dismissed that performed so remarkable a service as the hearings on the recall of General MacArthur. Conducted in a fair and elevated manner by Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, these hearings before two top Senate committees were a unique achievement, even though they produced no notable findings and no concrete action whatever. They served, first, to lower the national fever over the MacArthur affair, which was running so high that otherwise rational citizens completely forgot the proper relationship between military and civilian authority in a democracy. More important in the long run, these hearings demonstrated to the country and to the world that we did, in fact, have a foreign policy which could be explained and defended, if not endorsed in all its particulars. They gave men like Secretary Acheson and General Marshall an opportunity to defend themselves—and impressively—against the scurrilous assaults of the McCarthys and Jenners. Not least, the investigation demonstrated to other nations, as few things American could, that, MacArthur notwithstanding, we were not hell-bent for war; and that, Russian propaganda notwithstanding, we were still enough of a democracy to argue out basic conflicts of opinion in sober and responsible fashion.

Of the other significant investigations, the Kefauver inquiry into the operations of criminal rings was no doubt the most sensational, but others may prove more fruitful in the long run. Exposure of the tactics used in the Maryland and Ohio election campaigns will very likely lead to revision of a thoroughly inadequate code. Senator Douglas's inquiry into ethical standards in government, while less specific in nature, marked out an area of weakness which will have to be treated in all seriousness if we are to check corruption at the center of power. Finally, Senator Benton's successful

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move to dig into the conduct of Senator McCarthy marked the turning point both in the career of that demagogue and in the decline of the Senate's reputation for courage and self-discipline.

GRANTED all that has been said of the inadequacies of recent Congresses, it is nevertheless true that in the most pressing area of legislation they have delivered to the President pretty much what he has asked for. No one will doubt that this area is the field of foreign policy, and here the record of Congress is all the more remarkable in view of the passionate antagonism of so many of its members toward Secretary of State Acheson, his predecessor, and a good many of his colleagues. Here it is worth quoting Alistair Cooke again, in view of his over-all criticism: "Although the Congressional Record at times made it look as if the oratory of the Tafts, the Wherrys, and the Kems set the national temper, the fact is that troops were sent to Europe, grain was voted for India, prodigious military aid was granted to Europe and Asia, the Reciprocal Trade Act was extended again, as it has been every year since 1933. . . . For foreign aid, the original Presidential estimate of $8,600 million was reduced, after all the fuss and feathers about 'paying for European Socialism,' by only $1,300 millions." In other words, as Mr. Cooke freely admits, "Mr. Truman can get just about what any other President would get in this period of building up the Western defenses." A fair summary.

While no attempt will be offered here to defend the leadership of the Lucases, McFarlands, Tafts, and Wherrys, it is reasonable to admit that Congressional leadership inevitably diminishes as foreign policy grows in importance. The latter is largely, and necessarily, a function of the executive, and when it colors all other legislative activity, as is certainly the case today, Congress is bound to take a somewhat subordinate position and look to the White House for signals. This is a role that naturally irks legislators and offends their historic pride as a body. Which accounts for the tendency to go along with the President at a distance—grudgingly, with reservations, and with as much insistence on Congressional prerogative as can well be maintained. I think this is a fair description of the attitude of the past three Congresses. But in terms of world responsibility, who can say that they do not compare more than favorably with the one that wrecked Woodrow Wilson and reduced his dreams to rubble?

MAN for man, the present Senate is no worse than dozens of its predecessors, and better than many. Alongside the McCarthy-for-LaFollette replacements, others must be considered which critics of Congress tend to overlook: a Kefauver in place of a long series of hacks sent to Washington by the Memphis machine of "Boss" Crump; Paul Douglas, who would have graced any Senate in our history, in place of Colonel McCormick's ineffable "Curly" Brooks; able Senators like Monroney of Oklahoma and Humphrey of Minnesota supplanting nonentities like Moore and Ball; a Sparkman and a Hill representing the state once served by Tom Heflin—not to mention young Russell B. Long, who now speaks soberly and ably on the spot where his father once jigged, clowned, and offered recipes for pot-likker through a fifteen-hour filibuster.*

Those who complain that the Senate no longer boasts men of the caliber of Clay, Calhoun, and Webster are referred to the similar plaint of Alexis de Tocqueville. When those giants still spoke in the land, the keen French observer commented sadly that "the race of American statesmen has

* Perhaps it needs to be said that in supporting the dangerous and constitutionally questionable McCarran bill, men like Humphrey and Douglas were trapped by what was basically a tactical blunder rather than affected by any philosophical change of heart. They had hoped to circumvent a "thought-control" bill by substituting a severe measure to be directed against potential Communist spies and saboteurs only in time of war or dire emergency. In the end the bills were combined, and it should be said for Humphrey and some of his colleagues that they voted, albeit futilely, to sustain the President's veto.

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evidently dwindled most remarkably in the course of the last fifty years." That would seem to argue that if we have been going downhill, there is at least nothing new about a decline that began in 1789. But the late Charles A. Beard did not see it that way at all. Surveying the work of the 76th Congress (1939-1941), he wrote: "As a more than casual student of the Congressional Record, I venture this opinion. It is possible to pick out of the Record for the past ten years addresses which, for breadth of knowledge, technical skill, analytical acumen, close reasoning, and dignified presentation, compare favorably with similar utterances made in the preceding century by the so-called great orators. . . . There is, to be sure, more trash—bad poetry, demagogic claptrap, and clotted nonsense. . . . Yet after studying the operations of the first Congresses of the United States and the operations of the Seventy-sixth Congress, I am convinced that for disinterestedness, absence of corruption, and concern with the public good, the present body is of a higher order."

Improvement of personnel in individual instances, and the opposite, mean little as such; they tend generally to strike a balance. We are concerned here with Congress as an institution, and on this score it seems to me, in sum, far less accurate to say that Congress is going downhill, or even that its liberals are giving up the fight, than that it is going through a painful process of adjustment—to long-range changes within the country and to fearful uncertainties from without. The danger posed by Russia has already been mentioned, and the indecisiveness it causes is at least understandable. That Congresses basically hostile to the President and his diplomatic advisers should have gone along on the entire policy of "containment," from the Greek-Turkish program to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a tribute to their awareness and responsibility, however grudging they have been in manner and in detail.

WHAT is harder to appreciate, perhaps, is the difficulty of Congressmen in the face of the domestic changes brought on by the New Deal. Our national representatives have always had to do double duty, serving as errand boys for their constituents as well as legislators, but in the simpler days before 1933 government played only a small role in the daily lives of the voters, whose pressures on Representatives and Senators were mild and manageable. As Calvin Coolidge remarked in the 20's, the federal government could cease to operate and the average citizen wouldn't know the difference for three months. Today, with price controls, Social Security, an enormous defense program, huge federal power projects, comprehensive farm plans, loyalty probes, and all the other areas in which government operates extensively, millions of citizens have pressing business in Washington who never before gave more than a passing thought to government, and that only in election years.

Where a Senator once considered twenty letters a big day's mail, the average Congressman now gets a hundred a day, and during crucial debates he may get as many as seventy-five hundred. And they had better be answered. Where the First Congress passed 118 bills and resolutions, a Congress today grinds out more than a thousand, many of which are of enormous technical complexity. In his excellent book *Congress at the Crossroads,* George B. Galloway harks back to the life of a Congressman before World War I: "Congress was then in session only nine months out of twenty-four, and the members spent the remainder of their terms at home practicing law or attending to their private business. The mail they received then dealt largely with free seed, rural routes, Spanish War pensions, and occasionally a legislative matter. . . . 'It was a pretty nice job that a member of Congress had in those days,' Representative Ramspeck reminisced when he appeared thirty-four years later [1945] before a joint committee studying the burdens of legislation. 'At that time the Government affected the people directly in only a minor way. . . . It was an entirely different job from the job we have to do today.

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It was primarily a legislative job, as the Constitution intended it to be.'" As crisis followed crisis, the federal government expanded, and Congress, lacking the technical knowledge required, pressed for time, and harried by constituents, found itself forced "to place greater reliance upon the President and his well-staffed agencies for guidance and to delegate responsibility for policy-making, economic regulation, and social adjustment to a host of federal commissions, bureaus, and agencies."

To the extent that this occurred, and few observers will question that it was a significant extent, Congress has lost some ground as an institution. But it has not surrendered willingly or permanently, as the number of investigations eloquently testifies. Power has been delegated, but as the Roosevelt spell fades, Congress—jealous as always of its prerogatives—is attempting to limit and guide the exercise of that power. It has become as much the watchdog as the maker of policy. Where this takes the form of obstruction and infringement of the executive's rights, it is obviously harmful. Where it constitutes a reasonable assertion of what were Congressional prerogatives to begin with, it can be a healthy and democratic practice.

In the long run, the hope is that Congress itself will acquire, as it is now in the process of doing, the facilities for adequate knowledge, as well as devise parliamentary procedures geared to the swiftness of events. Beyond these, Congressmen sorely need freedom from the strain of having to spend half their time as lobbyists seeking favors and services for their constituents from the administrative agencies. While this period of adaptation continues, it is unlikely that Congress will take the lead. But, fortunately for its own integrity and the system of representative government, neither will it docilely follow the lead of the executive.

IF GENERALIZATIONS are permissible at all, then, in a field as broad and fluid as this, the following ones would seem to be in order. Congress as a whole has been moving in a conservative direction since the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, not to the point of having reversed the welfare program of the New Deal, or even trying to, but certainly to the extent of calling a halt to further experimentation. It is certainly arguable that this trend reflects a shift toward caution in the electorate. If Congress has been marking time, it is partly because the election results of 1946 and 1950 discouraged any further pressing for liberal measures, partly because President Truman's leadership has been less inspiring and less adroit than Roosevelt's, and partly because the unsettled state of the world has left Congressmen as uncertain of the future as the rest of us. Efforts to strengthen the structure of civil liberties by law have been paralyzed not only by the same Southern bloc that filibustered even in the days of the New Deal, but by the climate of opinion generated by Russian truculence, Communist behavior everywhere in the world, and the exploitation of those dangers by our own demagogues of the right. Finally, Congress as an institution is struggling, as we have suggested, to adjust itself to historic changes which have put upon its members so great a burden that a certain transfer of power to the executive branch has been inevitable.

Congress, in short, currently shows the weaknesses that always appear in parliamentary bodies in a period of uncertainty, fear, and swift change. We have had such times in the past, notably during the Civil War and its aftermath, and with similar—often worse—effect. In any case, there is little warrant for despair as to the capacity of Congress to assert itself as a working institution of democracy. In an immediate sense we have a right to expect, even to demand, that Congress bring itself, at the least, abreast of the times and to hope for a demonstration of the country's basic good sense at the polls—in Wisconsin, for example, that will assist the process. But in the long run we can look for relief in this area, as in so many others, only to a successful conclusion of the cold war, that prime source of the instability, fear, and confusion that feed the streams of political quackery and ineptitude.

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THE PASSING OF THE BATLAN

A Grasshopper Among the Ants of Learning

THEODOR H. GASTER

IF THE *batlan* is passing from our midst, as many allege, so much the worse for us all. Undoubtedly the Jews and Judaism will survive, but neither will be quite the same. For the *batlan* is the last relic of a noble tradition. You may translate *batlan* "idler" or "waster of time," but, if you do, you miss the point and malign rather than describe. The *batlan* is an idler in a special sense, and while he may waste other people's time, of his own he is merely oblivious. Amid the stir and bustle of modern life, your *batlan* is the mental saunterer, the intellectual *flâneur*: Jewish style. Though of humbler cast, he is yet of the same substance as Sam Johnson and Boswell themselves. He is the man who has learned to distinguish between idleness and indolence, who has made a business of leisure and is determined that it shall yield a profit. He knows that time is something to spend and not to save. His life is a continuous Sabbath afternoon; and on his spiritual escutcheon are emblazoned the words (which might also serve as his epitaph): Good Lord, is it already sunset?

IN MY father's house there were many *batlanim*. (This is not an aspersion upon a large family, though we all of us, to be sure, had our fair share of *batlanuth*.) They came from the four ends of the earth. Some of them were mere intellectual eavesdroppers—men who ambled in on a Sabbath afternoon to catch a little conversation, and maybe also a little gossip, and whose only contribution to the general talk was an introductory recitation of their pedigree and provenience and an occasional grunt of recognition at the mention of someone else's relative in Hamburg or Calcutta. But if they were inarticulate, they were nonetheless eager. When the talk turned to "words of Torah," to the things which, as the rabbis put it, stand at the very top of the universe, they would carefully deposit their teacups on the floor beside them, and shift to the edge of their chairs, and crane forward, with all the air of pigeons pecking at peanuts, anxious, as it were, to be at least on the periphery of learning. In time they might graduate into regular *talmidim*. In that case, they would come in on weekdays to help catalogue the library. How many cards they managed to write or file in a single afternoon was nobody's business, but when one got home from school one would find them darting around among the books on a constant voyage of discovery and reminiscence. Rusty bits of schoolboy Latin and *cheder* Hebrew would come back to them nostalgically as they copied title and imprint, and made out among the imprints the familiar names of Frankfort and Ulm and Altona. Most of them were recent arrivals from abroad, grateful, albeit unconsciously, to find in an alien world some haven of ancestral and traditional values. Gradually, however, the winds of the world

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HOWEVER unofficial, the *batlan* (literally, "idler") was once as much an institution of Jewish life as the synagogue or the marriage contract. But so unredeemed is our time, that he has become in the popular imagination a mere synonym for a nuisance and a bore. Here THEODOR H. GASTER—a Jewish scholar of eminence and no mean *batlan* himself—tries to restore him to his true stature as an unsung peddler of ideas, the vehicle of an insatiable and invaluable curiosity. As a recipient of a Fulbright fellowship, Mr. Gaster is at present visiting professor in the history of religions at the University of Rome. At the moment, he writes us, he is combining his academic duties with the Roman ideal of *otium cum dignitate* and the Jewish ideal of *batlanuth*. Perhaps we should identify the father of his story as that great British rabbi and scholar, Moses Gaster.

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blew upon them and—in Bialik's wonderful phrase—they were drawn up and absorbed in the morning of their days. One came across them in later years—successful businessmen comfortably ensconced in their swivel chairs in New York or Chicago, a little self-conscious and deprecatory of their years of *batlanuth*, but also not a little nostalgic and not entirely innocent of a sense of treason and betrayal. And when one leafs today through the cards of the catalogue file, it seems, as one detects their various hands (*batlanim* do not type), that the wings of the *Shekhinah* rustle.

Yes, in my father's house I came to know the *batlan*—that happy cross between *luftmensh* and *nudnik*—between the peddler of dreams on the one hand and the importunate simpleton on the other. And it is just because he is so difficult to define, and because the lines are so thinly drawn, that he is so easily confused with either one or the other. If he is successful in the world, he is a *luftmensh*—an airy, expensive "man of ideas," an eccentric, a character, an artist; if he fails, he is a *nudnik*—a nuisance, a bore, an encumbrance.

The full-time *batlan* is as unmistakable as a red cardinal in a treeful of birds. He is as ubiquitous as the Holy Presence, though far more gregarious. He is to be found wherever men foregather. He has the next chair at the barber's, and the seat beside you in the subway. He is one row ahead at the public meeting and the theater, and he invariably shares the ride home from funerals. He is there like a specter in the lobby of the synagogue, and he sidles up to your table in the restaurant and sits down uninvited. If you slip out at night for a pack of cigarettes, you are almost sure to meet him in the street; and the chances are that he will be loitering at the Pearly Gates discussing with his fellows the manufacture of harps.

Not all of my father's *batlanim* were Jews. There was the venerable, bearded priest, who had been the trusted friend of Herzl and who was now nearly ninety years old, who came regularly on Monday afternoons and pulled out of the ample pockets of his cloak—a veritable Elijah's mantle—an ever lengthening roll on which, in a glory of varied inks, was set forth an elaborate chart of doom calculated from the prophecies of Daniel. He was far from being a gloomy man, but he knew full well that doom was nigh and ineluctable; for every limb of the heathen image which Daniel had described represented, in reality, an epoch of man's history, and now—as he once greeted our Welsh maid at the door—"we were near the toes." When I took him to his bus, he would stand upon the crowded platform and hold up its departure the while he solemnly pronounced upon me the threefold blessing of Aaron; and when the conductor kindly inquired his destination, he would reply that he was on his way from the Jerusalem on earth to the Jerusalem on high.

Then there was the Great Gnostic. In his youth, he had been one of the foremost authorities on the literature and religious philosophy of the Gnostics, and his works are to be found on the shelves of every scholarly library worthy of the name. But now, in his later years, he had turned to Spiritualism. He was a regular frequenter of seances, and his home was the scene of spectacular revelations from the Beyond. But he was no dotard, and he insisted on what he called objective, scientific data; and he could still discuss Plotinus and Hermes Trismegistus with a vigor of mind, a depth of sympathetic insight and intuition, and a Shavian sense of mischievous dialectic which could put more orthodox scholars to shame. He was one of the few men who could tell my father he was hopelessly wrong, and get away with it. The Great Gnostic sticks in my mind because of a terrifying incident in which he was the main figure. One day he came to the house in the usual way, and my father happened to be out. The Great Gnostic stayed awhile to await his return, and my brother and I did our best to entertain him. The talk turned to his favorite subject, evidence of the Beyond. After we had

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ribbed him for his credulity, he turned suddenly and declared in half-humorous, half-serious vein: "Well, boys, I promise you here and now that if there really is possibility of communication with the dead, I will come back after my death and tell you so." I thought nothing more about the matter. But several years later, when the old man had gone to his rest, I was dreaming one night about something entirely different and unrelated when, all of a sudden, right across my dream, came the voice of the Great Gnostic. "Well," he said, "I have kept my promise. And soon you will yourself have proof, for soon you are going to join me." I asked how long I had to go. Six years? "Less," he replied. "One year?" "Less." "Six months?" "Yes." For six months I lived in a cold sweat, and was extra careful about crossing the street and hopping on buses while they were moving. At the end of that time, I knew that the Great Gnostic was merely *batlanizing* beyond the grave.

ONE speaks of the *batlan* as "he" because the whole world of *batlanuth* is alien and even suspect to the more practical temperament of women; there is necessarily no female of the species. The feminine equivalent of *batlanuth* is window-shopping and the white goods sale; and the *batlan* knows full well that the approach of a woman means death to his art. One can see this instinctive antagonism in action any warm Sabbath morning on Riverside Drive. There are the *batlanim* trekking home from their devotions, three and four abreast, walking, by time-honored tradition, a little ahead of the female contingent. But their independence is short-lived, for presently they come to a corner and the rearguard advances upon them. At once the little group stops in its tracks, there are hasty handshakes and farewells, and the exponents of the noble art disperse in their several directions like squirrels at the tread of a human foot.

The *batlan* is on nodding or buttonholing terms with everyone. There is no breath upon the communal waters but he observes it from the shore. He is full of inside and background stories, and though his information is rarely reliable, he insists on pouring it forth in a torrent of alternate reminiscence and fury. Yet—and this is what gives him distinction—he is not simply a gossip. The essence of *batlanuth* is a preoccupation with ideas, and personalities are but intriguing incidentals. The true *batlan* is the spiritual counterpart of the old-time peddler, and when he opens his *pekel*, what is revealed is a rich and varied assortment of "notions." He is a picker-up of unconsidered trifles, and the more expert and practiced he is, the more rarefied are his wares. (Not long ago I spent the better part of a night, with a real expert in the art, figuring out the Hebrew equivalent for "the cat's pajamas.")

NO, THE *batlan* is not altogether dead; his tribe is diminished in numbers, but one still runs into very lively specimens—or rather, they run into one, or let us better say, sidle.

The latter-day genus, in my experience on two sides of the ocean, has several species, and two claim special attention. The first is *batlanus bibliothecanus*, so called because his favorite haunts are the purlieus of a public library. There he sits, always in his overcoat, his chair turned sideways away from the desk, never reading but always turning pages. Every now and then he relieves the tedium by darting to the open shelves, scanning a few titles, and immediately resuming his seat. If the librarian is around and is not too busy, the librarian is invariably his first victim. (I have been on both sides of this fence, so I speak not only as the scribes but also as one having had authority.) He does not seek bibliographical information. As often as not, he passes in brief review all of the new books exhibited on the shelf, and proceeds thence by a process of free association to that cultured exploitation of his own leisure and his victim's time which is the essence of his calling. Alternatively, you may find him lurking furtively beside the card catalogue ready to pounce before his victim has a

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chance of getting settled. "Silence" notices are to him academic; the library is not a repository of books but an intellectual stock exchange and he is short-tempered and caustic with those officious functionaries who would endeavor to restrict its province to strictly utilitarian purposes.

Then there is *batlanus scholasticus*. This is at once the youngest and the deadliest of all. A mere fledgling, his eye has not yet been dimmed, nor his natural vigor abated. His usual age is between seventeen and twenty-three, and his haunt is the college classroom. What makes him so deadly is the fact that he is a hybrid, for through his veins courses the blood of that noxious termite, *nudnicus vulgaris*. His approach is forthright, not insidious. Its warning gesture is the upraised hand (though this is often omitted), and it is followed in short order by the Ideological Discussion. *Batlanus scholasticus* is usually full of wide but undisciplined reading—he is a kind of intellectual Lavengro—and the principle upon which he works is that anything the lecturer may say *must* link up somewhere and somehow with the miscellany of his own erudition and must possess wider "implications" which demand revelation, discussion, and exposition, if the rest of the class is not to be left in that state of unenlightenment from which he himself has providentially escaped. He is usually a person of astute intelligence, even of brilliance, but to him *batlanuth* is the technique rather than the adjunct of learning. No complete antidote to him has yet been discovered. He often graduates into a Viennese feuilletonist; his sister follows Vedanta and collects swamis.

Thus the full-time, professional *batlanim*. But forget not the amateurs—men who follow the gleam without being burned by the fire, to whom *batlanuth* is a hobby rather than a vocation, a tingling in the blood rather than a ferment. Many of these "honorary" *batlanim* are humble men who find themselves unable to trek the wilderness without intermittent pauses at the oases. But others are—or have been—great scholars who have recognized in occasional or periodic *batlanuth* a necessary instrument in the process of intellectual creation.

FULL-TIME or part-time, *batlanuth* was once held in due honor as a necessary ingredient in the process of civilization. The derivation of the word *school* from the Greek *schole*, "leisure," is trite but eloquent testimony to this fact; while when the Roman spoke of *otium cum dignitate* ("leisure with dignity") as an enviable ideal, what he meant, of course, was refined *batlanuth*. Nor, indeed, has the tradition entirely died out; for the Athenaeum Club on the one hand and the professorial common room on the other may be considered, to a large extent, as latter-day survivals of that wondrous Mecca of *batlanim*, the 18th-century coffeehouse.

Within the narrower confines of our Jewish life, *batlanuth* has certainly served us well, and few of those who have really enhanced our heritage have ever disdained it. Scripture itself is witness that the Law was revealed not only in a moment of thunder and lightning but also in forty days and forty nights of quiet conversation, when God spoke familiarly with Moses "even as a man speaketh with his friend." One may suppose also that several of the rabbinic discussions recorded in the Talmud owed their origin, in large measure, to the leisurely consort of mind with mind.

Nor, indeed, need our evidence be either so ancient or so exalted. It suffices to think only of the goodly dose of *batlanuth* (again in the better sense of the term) which went into the making of the Hasidic masters, or —in more modern times—of the intellectual ferment that must have ensued and the stimulus that must have resulted from every session of "The Wandering Jews," that wonderful coterie of Schechter, Zangwill, Joseph Jacobs, and Israel Abrahams (to name but a few), which met weekly in the house of Asher Myers in London for the express purpose of practicing the noble art and of thereby sharpening mind upon mind. (On a somewhat less illustrious level, Myers' son, Maurice, kept up the tradition

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in his own generation, and all of us who frequented the gatherings at his home hold his memory cherished and blessed.)

Much, too, of the prime foundation of Zionism was laid by men who were not ashamed to be *batlanim*—to devote their time and energy (and sometimes, like Herzl, their lives) to a project which then seemed both visionary and impractical; and no one who is at all acquainted with the history of Jewish cultural movements will gainsay the contention that the cocoon of the chrysalis is almost invariably *batlanuth*. Most of those movements have, in fact, been launched by a couple of *batlanim* sipping tea with lemon.

But deny the facts, resist them as you will, today undeniably the *batlan* has fallen upon evil times. The accelerated pace of modern life has caused him to be regarded, more or less, as a jalopy on an arterial highway. He has to apologize for his existence; the spark from the altar fire is too apt to be dismissed as useless and "afunctional" and no adequate substitute for central heating. One perceives the evidence of this change and decay the moment one walks into the office of any of the leading communal organizations. In the old days, what one would have found, as often as not, would have been either some lean and hungry Cassius or a big, florid, dyspeptic, and untidy man sitting in a dingy room before a stained and weather-worn table, taking time out to compose a Yiddish feuilleton (maybe even a poem or a play about the Maccabees), eager to talk about anything but the matter in hand, full of local and international intelligence, bursting with untempered indignations and fantastic schemes, and ready at any moment to switch the conversation to the appraisal of some current literary controversy or to the novel (and probably incorrect) exegesis of some difficult passage of Scripture or Talmud. In short, one could be reasonably sure of a good hour of *batlanuth*, secure in the knowledge that where two are met together in this way, the Holy One, blessed be He, invariably makes a third.

So today the glory is departed from Israel. Today it is a trim receptionist who greets one impersonally from behind a window and efficiently flicks a button so that presently one may be ushered into the plush-and-airy holy of holies of some brisk, clean-shaven functionary, with glasses a little too brightly polished and tie a little too tightly knotted, who dismisses as purely academic the question of where he is going and what he expects to get. Here are no battered volumes of Hamaggid strewn over table and chairs and floor, no tired copy of Graetz or Dubnow leaning for support, upon a dusty shelf, between the Annual Report on the one side and the Hebrew Bible on the other. Here, on the desk, are no scattered slips filled with cryptic citations of Biblical verses or mysterious mnemonic hieroglyphs. Here, instead, there is a gleaming steel cabinet, two little trays labeled demurely "In" and "Out," and a sectional glass bookcase in which are imprisoned, rather than ensconced, serried volumes of *The Statesman's Yearbook* and *Who's Who in the East.*

One can never visit these fanes of Efficiency—at least, I cannot—without a sense of melancholy and regret. (*O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance. . . . They have set up their own signs for signs.*) Unless one's thoughts are interrupted by some importunate *batlan,* one begins invariably to wonder how much has been lost to both Jewish and general life by this invasion of the ancient shrines, this substitution of strategy for philosophy, of technique for concept, of routine for passion . . . and of the latter-day streamlined "conference" for the old-fashioned *shmoos.*

There is a prayer in the Sabbath Grace after Meals which beseeches the All-Merciful to "cause us to inherit a world which shall be always Sabbath and tranquil leisure for ever." This is, indeed, the prayer of the *batlanim.* When that world is ushered in, they will surely return to their own as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Having been a little chastened, they shall have great reward.

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LINCOLN STEFFENS: HE COVERED THE FUTURE

The Prototype of a Fellow-Traveler

GRANVILLE HICKS

IN THE spring of 1931, just as it was becoming apparent to all but a few diehards that prosperity was not around the corner, there appeared *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens,* possibly the most influential book of the 1930's. Persons my age or a little older—I was in my thirtieth year when the *Autobiography* was published—found in the book a recapitulation of much that we had seen or at any rate known about, and it strengthened convictions we had already formed or were forming. The book's effect on us, however, considerable as it was, was as nothing compared with its effect on younger persons, those in college or just out of it, who had experienced only the expansiveness and extravagance of the 20's. Where we had felt more or less disillusionment with the war and the peace and the fruitlessness of reformist hopes, Versailles and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom were for them merely words in the history books. The overwhelming fact of their lives was the depression, which compelled them to ask: "How did we get this way? How did we come to such a pass?" Steffens's answer in the *Autobiography* had the force of revelation.

For nearly forty years he had been a reporter, a muckraker, a student of politics, and as he set forth his experiences in the *Autobiography,* the lesson they taught became obvious: every type of corruption led him straight to big business, to special privilege; what was wrong was "the system." To change the system was the only conceivable cure for our evils.

Actually, Steffens did not in the *Autobiography* preach Communism or any other dogma. To some of us, indeed, his broadmindedness was annoying. The system must be changed, our ideas and moral standards must be changed, but perhaps, he told us, various kinds of change were possible. Lenin had made one kind of change in Russia, Mussolini had made another in Italy. Perhaps the United States was working out a third way of change in the "new capitalism." We read and we smiled: Steffens himself had made it clear that Mussolini's fascism solved no fundamental problems, and as for the "new capitalism," it had died while the *Autobiography* was on the presses. We knew that Russian Communism was the only practical alternative; and soon after the book was published, Steffens showed that he agreed.

FOR those of us who were well on our way to Communism when the *Autobiography* appeared, the book had one special importance: it showed that there was a strictly American path to Communist conclusions, and even in our alienation from the American social order, this mattered more than perhaps we were ready to admit. Steffens's life was full of traditional American motifs: he had led a Tom Sawyer boyhood; he had gone abroad to study, like Henry Adams and so many of Adams's New England predecessors; he had

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MANY Americans who in the 1930's turned toward a faith in the Russian Revolution and Communism found a special support and comfort in the familiar, home-grown figure of Lincoln Steffens. GRANVILLE HICKS tries here to analyze the remarkable career of that "hard-headed," muckraking American journalist who came to see the Soviet prescription as a sovereign remedy for all our ills. Where and why did Steffens's brand of liberalism go wrong? And, a more important question, is his kind of mistake being made in new contexts? Mr. Hicks, present literary editor of the *New Leader* and former literary editor of the *New Masses,* is the author of several books, including *The Great Tradition* (1933), *Figures of Transition* (1939), and *Small Town* (1946). With Ella Winter, Lincoln Steffens's widow, Mr. Hicks edited Steffens's *Letters,* published by Harcourt, Brace in 1938.

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been a struggling journalist, and a success. And yet out of all this he came to Communism.

For most people today, when Communism seems so utterly "foreign," Steffens's Americanism presents a problem, indeed the central problem. Recently a college student who was doing a term paper on Steffens wrote to me: "It seems to me that the most important question is why, after he began by loving America and everything it stood for and having come to know it as well as any man could, Steffens should have renounced our system and turned to Communism as the salvation for this country and the world. His life provides a clue to the causes of the appeal of Communism in the United States. . . ."

Steffens had everything Americans are supposed to want—money, prestige, the friendship of the great. And yet he became a Communist in all but party membership. How did it happen?

Many ex-Communists today seek simply to forget their Communist past. Others sometimes seem to imply that anyone who was not a Communist in the depression decade must have had something wrong with him—ignoring the fact that, even if it is better to be wrong for good reasons than right for bad ones, that still does not make wrong right. The only thing to do with a mistake is to understand it, for until it is understood, there is danger that it may be repeated.

IN STEFFENS's lively and charming account of his boyhood and youth, there is not much that we can seize upon as explaining the later course of his life. Somehow, however, as we know from the *Letters*, he became an earnest seeker after wisdom and truth. When he went to Germany for graduate study, he wrote his mother: "There may exist no good, no true, no beautiful and no soul, no higher faculties of the mind, no need of heart and feeling, but if they do or not I shall know soon."*

He was, then, a young man in quest of the absolute, and his disillusionment was by no means so amusing as he makes it sound in the *Autobiography*. He traveled from university to university, and only gradually gave up his confidence in Hegelian metaphysics to become, as he thought, an empiricist—but it is significant that when he turned from philosophy to science, it was in the hope of finding a "scientific" basis for ethics.

Forced to give up his researches into scientific ethics in order to earn a living, he became a journalist, and a very good one. But ethical problems remained uppermost in his thinking, and he became obsessed as a journalist with the inadequacy of accepted morality to cope with American politics, where lying, bribery, and other immoral acts, as he discovered, were matters of course. It was a discovery that other journalists had made before him, but Steffens refused to take refuge in the easy cynicism of the average newspaper man—which is, of course, no different from the cynicism of most people who are in the know. He wanted to find ways of eliminating political corruption, and he also wanted to understand it. As his understanding grew, he developed one of his characteristic devices, the use of paradox, and in his writings of the 90's we first find those speculations on the goodness of bad men and the badness of good men that are so frequent in the *Autobiography*. The trick was excellent journalism, but for Steffens it was more than a trick: it was a way of holding irreconcilable facts in suspension.

STEFFENS became a muckraker by accident; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the muckraking movement itself was an accident, one for which he was partly responsible. There was nothing novel about the exposing of evils; as one of Steffens's colleagues, Ray Stannard Baker, was fond of pointing out, the muckrakers could find plenty of precedents in both the Old Testament and the New. In the United States after the Civil War, however, the literature of exposure took on a peculiar tone of urgency, because it was concerned not

*Acknowledgement is made to the publisher, Harcourt, Brace, for permission to use the quotations from the *Autobiography* and the *Letters*.

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only with the denunciation of evils but also with the exploration of mysteries. Three vastly influential books of the late 19th century—Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1880), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), and Henry Demarest Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (1894)—attempted to describe the revolution that was taking place in the life of the United States. Today we can see readily enough how hopelessly oversimplified their account was; but they did broadcast the disturbing discovery that a few individuals, through the exploitation of the opportunities supposed to be the birthright of every American, had got into strategic positions of great wealth and power, and had managed to bar great masses of their contemporaries from access to opportunity. This was "the system" that had to be fought.

The muckraking movement, which communicated this discovery to large numbers of people, was made possible by the rise of the cheap magazine in the 1890's. Having had a spectacular success on the New York *Evening Post* and the *Commercial Advertiser,* Steffens was invited in 1901 to become managing editor of one of the most popular of these new magazines, *McClure's.* His first job was an exposure of corruption in St. Louis; in the issue of *McClure's* that carried his second article, "The Shame of Minneapolis," appeared an installment of Ida Tarbell's *History of the Standard Oil Company* and Ray Stannard Baker's "The Right to Work." The muckraking movement had begun, though it was not to find its name until Theodore Roosevelt supplied it, derisively, in 1906.

It was a triumph of popular journalism, spreading from *McClure's* into rival magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan, Everybody's, Collier's,* and, after Steffens and some of his associates on *McClure's* had taken it over, the *American.* Many other magazines took up the idea before the vogue began to decline in 1911 or 1912. Upton Sinclair charged in *The Brass Check* that muckraking was deliberately suppressed, and there is something in this charge, but it must also be said that muckraking simply wore itself out as journalistic fashions will. The early muckrakers documented their exposures with considerable care, but sensationalists moved into the field, and the public got tired. Furthermore, some of the muckrakers themselves, including Steffens, began to question the value of what they were doing. Steffens eventually was to become convinced that it had accomplished nothing. "Take it from me," he wrote in the 30's: "muckraking leads to entertainment, not to action. It's the other way around. Action leads to information." He took the same attitude, according to Charles Edward Russell, when he and Russell met in Paris after the First World War. Russell, on the other hand, attributed many specific reforms to muckraking: pure food and drug laws, the direct election of Senators, regulations providing greater safety in railroad travel, and so on. He argued further that Steffens's articles had themselves had great effect, and urged him to go back and have a look at Minneapolis. "There hasn't been a particle of change," Steffens said. "If I were to go back now, I'd find everything exactly the same."

In the beginning, however, Steffens had no doubts about the effectiveness of what he was doing. He worked hard to get the facts, he wrote clearly and persuasively, and he believed that his readers would respond to his challenge. In his introduction to the first collection of his articles, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), he wrote: "The real triumph of the year's work was the complete demonstration it has given, in a thousand little ways, that our shamelessness is superficial, that beneath it lies a pride which, being real, may save us yet. . . . We Americans may have failed. We may be mercenary and selfish. Democracy with us may be impossible and corruption inevitable, but these articles, if they have proved nothing else, have demonstrated beyond doubt that we can stand the truth; that there is pride in the character of American citizenship; and that this pride may be a power in the land." His second book, *The Struggle for Self-Government* (1906), he introduced with an ironic

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dedication to the Czar of Russia, informing him that he need not fear to grant his subjects representative government, free speech, a free press, education, and the suffrage. "For have I not shown, Sire, that we, the great American people, have all that we want of all these things, and that, nevertheless, our government differs from yours—in essentials—not so much as you thought, not so much as your people think, and not nearly so much as my people think?" This, of course, was principally a way of pricking that American pride to which the earlier introduction had alluded. In *The Upbuilders* (1908) Steffens employed direct exhortation: "Wherever the people have found a leader who was loyal to them; brave; and not too far ahead, there they have followed him, and there has begun the solution of our common problem; the problem of the cities, states, and nations—the problem of civilized living in human communities."

These three introductions are the closest thing we have to a formal statement of Steffens's political views in his muckraking period. They all express a belief that the majority of the people will exercise their political rights honestly and intelligently if they are given the truth and if they have the proper kind of leadership. Actually, however, his views were undergoing a change during these years. In the *Autobiography* he says that as early as 1904 he had reached these conclusions: "Political corruption is not a matter of men or classes or education or character of any sort; it is a matter of pressure. Wherever the pressure is brought to bear, society and government cave in. The problem, then, is one of dealing with the pressure, of discovering and dealing with the cause or the source of the pressure to buy and corrupt." "But," he continues, "I did not, I could not, write that yet. I still believed, and my readers still believed, that there were some kinds of men that would neither buy nor sell and that the job was to get such men into power."

Obviously Steffens was coming close to socialism, and he was not unaware of that fact. In 1908 he laid some of his ideas before Theodore Roosevelt in a letter, and Roosevelt replied that what he was advocating amounted to socialism, adding, "What is needed is the *fundamental fight for morality*." Steffens answered: "You point ahead to Socialism, and it may well be that we shall have to go that far. If we do, to get things right, then I, for one, should be willing to go there."

That same year Steffens did an article on Eugene Debs, the Socialist candidate for President, and Debs commented: "You have written from and have been inspired by a social brain, a social heart and a social conscience and if you are not a Socialist I do not know one." Steffens summed it all up in a letter to his sister: "As for Socialism, I certainly am socialistic, but I'm not yet a Socialist."

When he had finished with muckraking, Steffens tried his hand as a practical reformer in Boston, with the idea of combining the resources of the good bad men and the bad good men. One is surprised, not that the idea failed but that its failure surprised Steffens. Even more extraordinarily, he emerged as an advocate of applied Christianity. "I have come up out of the muck," he wrote in *Everybody's* for December 1911, "believing that Christianity will work; that we can trust mankind; that liberty and reason, education and patience and kindness; in brief, that faith, hope, and charity would save the world. And I mean now. I mean right here in the United States in this year of our Lord, 1911. I believe that Christianity is a practical theory of social conduct."

In view of what we know about Steffens's thinking at the time, it would be hard to take this passage at face value, and there is a letter that he wrote to his sister about the article in which it appeared: "I wrote it all with a smile on my mind, and sometimes I laughed out loud." So Steffens's tongue was in his cheek. But was it? Readers of the *Autobiography* will remember that it discusses with perfect seriousness his experiments in Christianity. ("I preached Christianity, and the effect was a shock to the

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congregation.") Moreover, there was the McNamara case.

J. J. and J. B. McNamara, members of the International Association of Bridge and Iron Workers, were charged with having dynamited the building of the Los Angeles *Times*, causing the death of twenty-one persons. Clarence Darrow was conducting their defense, and the entire labor movement was strongly supporting them in their plea of innocence. Then Steffens told the McNamara brothers that if they would plead guilty, he would try to make the industrialists of Los Angeles understand why labor resorted to violence, and would appeal to them to show a Christian spirit of mercy. The McNamaras confessed and, according to his version of the story, Steffens did succeed in convincing the businessmen, but on the following Sunday the ministers preached against the McNamaras, and the judge, swayed by the public sentiment thus aroused, imposed vindictive sentences. No two accounts of the case agree, but some of the results of Steffens's intervention are undeniable: the McNamara brothers spent long terms in jail, as did two other men who were later convicted of a share in the dynamiting; Clarence Darrow was twice tried for perjury; the entire labor movement was seriously embarrassed; Job Harriman, Socialist candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, who had seemed certain of victory, was thoroughly beaten; plans for a labor truce in Los Angeles came to nothing.

Had Steffens seriously believed that Christianity would "work"? It seems unlikely. Just after the settlement he wrote his sister: "What I am really up to is to make people think. . . . And every time I can confront the busy world with what it thinks it thinks, I do it. The McNamara incident was simply a very successful stroke in this policy. It was like a dynamite explosion. It hurt; it may have killed some and it may land me in Coventry if not in San Quentin. But it has made people think." And a week later, writing from New York, he urged his sister to "remember that if I don't win, I shall be in a good position to say and carry my conclusion that Christianity will *not* work, not under present conditions. I've got them either way and all I have to do is to watch and report developments."

Both the *Autobiography* and the *Letters* show that Steffens was shocked and hurt by the resentment his action aroused, especially among persons who had been his good friends. He staunchly supported Darrow in the perjury trials, and he did his best to secure pardons for the McNamaras and for Matthew Schmidt, one of the later victims. But he never admitted that he had made a mistake, never seemed to feel that there was anything reprehensible in his having risked lives and causes to prove that Christianity wouldn't work, to "make people think."

Still Steffens hesitated to declare himself a revolutionary. He was out of favor now: the public had lost interest in muckraking, and editors, paradoxically, regarded his part in the McNamara case as evidence of radicalism. Personally as well he was at loose ends, for his wife had died early in 1911. But instead of becoming an active radical, he was content to sit back and "watch and report developments."

In the summer of 1914 Steffens went to Europe with a group of millionaires. It was not an important trip for him, but it provides the occasion for one of the crucial chapters of the *Autobiography*. In the long section on muckraking, Steffens has already demonstrated that reform won't work in America; then he has shown the failure of Christianity. Now, in reporting on this brief expedition shortened by the onset of war, he can say that all European countries are in the same situation as the United States, only at more advanced stages of decay. There was only one conclusion to be drawn, and that, in 1914, he felt he couldn't state: "How be heard saying that the process of political corruption we were reforming here and there was a mighty force that was, in Europe, making for the control of trade routes, spheres of influence, empire, war, and that the cost of war, economically and morally, would precipitate the revolution, which alone could change our course and our minds and save

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us?" He couldn't say that in 1914, but in 1931 he could.

What the reader of the *Autobiography* in 1931 was not likely to notice was that Steffens arrived at this generalization on the basis of very little evidence. When he was muckraking the American cities, he had come to believe that he would find the same forces at work in each, and his investigation seemed to prove him right. I have an idea now that there was less uniformity than he thought there was, but the fact remains that he did a careful study of each place he discussed, and even if his generalizations were extravagant, his factual account of what was going on was largely dependable. In Europe, on the other hand, he did not have to look, for he knew exactly what he would see.

This is important, for it reveals the pattern of Steffens's reporting from this time on. When the war broke out, he tells us, he was interested only in revolution, and so he went to Mexico to see how a revolution worked. He knew exactly what was going to happen, and of course it did: Carranza failed to "abolish privileges and close up the sources of corruption," and so the revolution failed. When he went to Kerensky's Russia in the spring of 1917, he again knew what he was going to see, and he saw it.

And it was just so when he visited Lenin's Russia two years later. Steffens talked with the Communist leaders, especially Lenin, and they said the things he had hoped they would say. He summed it up:

"The only idea that I could make my own was this that my muckraking had brought me to:

"Soviet Russia was a revolutionary government with an evolutionary plan. Their plan was, not by direct action to resist such evils as poverty and riches, graft, privilege, tyranny, and war, but to seek out and remove the causes of them. They were not practicing what we and they preached. They were not trying to establish political democracy, legal liberty, and negotiated peace—not now. They were at present only laying a basis for these good things. They had set up a dictatorship, supported by a small, trained minority, to make and maintain for a few generations a scientific arrangement of economic forces which would result in economic democracy first and political democracy last.

"It was a new culture, an economic, scientific, not a moral culture. And the Russians we were conversing with, the heads of the Soviet government, were talking out of a new philosophy. No wonder it was confusing and difficult."

Of course it was not in the least confusing or difficult to Steffens. The Soviet leaders were talking his language, and when they weren't, he could put the words in their mouth. His expectations were confirmed. In Soviet Russia, as he was to say so often, he had seen "the Future," and it "worked." What could he actually have seen in a few days in a country involved in civil war? But his claim to have seen with his own eyes a "real" revolution gave an air of authority to his pronouncements, and it bolstered his image of himself as one who arrived at decisions only on the basis of concrete evidence.

Once more, however, Steffens refused to become an active revolutionary. Some of his young friends, disillusioned by the Treaty of Versailles and excited by what he reported to them about the Russian Revolution, asked him what they should do. This, according to the *Autobiography*, is what he told them: "Either they and we all should labor to change the foundation of society, as the Russians were doing, or go along with the resultant civilization we were part of, taking care only to save our minds by seeing it all straight and thinking about it clearly." His age, his temperament, a young wife and, in time, a baby impelled him to choose for himself the latter course. He spent the 20's in France and Italy, thinking, watching, and enjoying life. His only important publication in those years was *Moses in Red*, a parable of the revolution defending dictatorship and the terror.

But during those years, when his name had almost been forgotten in America, Steffens was first meditating upon and then

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writing the book that was to make him as famous and as influential in the 30's as he had been in the muckraking decade. The chief purpose of the *Autobiography* was to report his two great discoveries: first, that corruption was inherent in the "system" and that reform was therefore impossible; second, that the Russian Revolution showed us our way of salvation. This second point he stated explicitly, but he confused the issue, for many readers, by saying not only that he had seen the Future in Russia and that it worked but also that he had seen Mussolini and Mussolini worked, and furthermore that he had seen the new capitalism—and *it* worked.

How much he meant by all these qualifications is not easy to determine. Most of the *Autobiography* was written while America was prospering—it was finished in the summer of 1930—and even if he had not had the failure of *Moses in Red* to remind him, Steffens would have known that this was no time to preach Communist revolution. Moreover, his own role, as he portrayed it in the book, was that of the skeptic, the hard-headed searcher for truth, and he could not afford to expose himself as a dogmatist. Besides, he still thought of himself as a man who was open to new ideas.

If one reads carefully, however, one realizes that Steffens was making only minor concessions. What the case of Mussolini proved was that the Bolshevik technique of revolution could be employed by the right as well as the left; but, Steffens was careful to point out, Mussolini had borrowed Lenin's methods without borrowing his aims; his revolution was a challenge to liberalism, but it was doomed to failure.

His attitude toward the new capitalism offers a more difficult problem. His letters show that he was honestly impressed by the achievements of mass production when he returned to the United States in 1927. He saw not only new methods of production but also the progress of scientific research in industry, and a shift of control into the hands of the young managers rather than the old financiers. Early in 1929 he wrote Jo Davidson: "Really, Jo, the unconscious experiment this country is making in civilization and culture is equal to that of Soviet Russia. The race is saved one way or the other and, I think, both ways. . . . Big business in America is producing what the Socialists held up as their goal; food, shelter and clothing for all." This seems forthright enough, but elsewhere Steffens makes it clear that what he saw in the new capitalism was a process by which business was taking over government, whereas in a "real" revolution government took over business. Government by business might work for a time, but in the long run Steffens expected it to be superseded by "the" revolution.

In other words, what he wrote in the *Autobiography* about the new capitalism was a mere pretense of open-mindedness. When he began his muckraking, Steffens believed that it was his mission to give the people the truth. But increasingly, as he so frankly admits, he came to feel that the people could not take the whole truth, and by the time he wrote the *Autobiography* he had fully formed the habit of telling his readers only so much of the truth as he thought it was good for them to know. He was, in effect, anticipating the "Popular Front" of the 30's, whose "leaders" pretended to beliefs they did not really hold in order to bring the "masses" closer to their real goals. And like the men of the "Popular Front," Steffens did not necessarily understand the implications of what he was doing.

In any case, once the *Autobiography* was published, Steffens felt ready to throw off the guise of ironic detachment, and began openly to preach Russian Communism. Nothing shook his faith. When the executions began after the assassination of Kirov, he wrote calmly that Russia had become liberal too fast and that the reinstitution of the Terror was absolutely necessary. And in a letter that he sent to be read at a Communist party rally in San Francisco in 1934, he said: "Communism can solve our problem. Communism does solve our problem—in Soviet Russia. That's my muckraker's procla-

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mation; that the American Communist Party program meets our American capitalist situation precisely, and it is the only American party that meets it—head on: all of it: the political corruption, the poverty and plenty, the periodic depressions of business—all our troubles; and proposes to solve them at any cost. . . ."

It should not be hard to imagine what such a statement meant to persons like myself, who were not, as is usually supposed, miraculously certain about the Communism to which they had committed themselves but, on the contrary, were constantly carrying on a rearguard action against a swarm of doubts. Steffens's assurance cleared away the doubts like a blast of machine gun fire, for he was our wise man and he had seen the Future with his own eyes. And the younger people, for whom the *Autobiography* was the one true map of the American economic wilderness, regarded his words as marching orders—and they marched, a lot of them, straight into the party.

To the undergraduate who wrote me recently about the *Autobiography,* it appears that Steffens should have been inoculated against Communism by love of country and faith in "our system," and the two things are closely associated in her mind. Today, when the conflict that divides the world is, in one of its aspects, a struggle between Russian and American nationalism, acceptance of Communism seems to be incompatible with any kind of patriotic sentiment. Yet my own principal venture in Communist propaganda was called, in all sincerity, *I Like America;* and the slogan "Communism is Twentieth-Century Americanism" had great propaganda value in its day just because most of the new Communist recruits and fellow-travelers were consciously devoted to their native land.

The issue was not patriotism, but "our system." By that, I take it, my correspondent means an amorphous complex of ideas, of which democratic government and free enterprise are two elements. Steffens, on the other hand, meant by the system just one thing: the private ownership of the means of production. It was responsible, he believed, for all our economic, political, and social evils, and these evils could be cured only if the system was changed. To desire to change the system, therefore, was not only compatible with love of country; it was the highest patriotism.

Actually, it was not patriotism that should have inoculated Steffens—and all of us—against Communism in the 30's, but liberalism. And many liberals, to be sure, did remain firm; but many others went over to Communism, and their conversion can only be regarded as a failure of liberalism or what currently passed by that name. The failure may become more comprehensible if we understand what happened to Lincoln Steffens.

IF THERE is one clear pattern in Steffens's thinking, it is his search for *a* solution. Although he soon lost the faith in absolute truth that he held when he began his studies in Germany, he never lost a kind of absolutist impatience. It never seems to have occurred to him that the struggle for good government might be unending. Like the good journalist who finishes one story and goes on to the next, or like the scientist who clears away numerous false hypotheses before he comes to the right solution, Steffens "eliminated" one social solution after another —muckraking, municipal reform, Christianity. But there had to be *a* solution.

Of course he was right in rejecting the conventional notion that the evils of politics can be explained simply in terms of bad men, but he was betrayed by his desire to solve the problem once and for all. In the story of Adam and Eve, which he often used in lectures and repeated in the *Autobiography,* he put the blame for original sin not on Adam, not on Eve, not on Satan, but on the apple. The trouble, he insisted, was "it"—the system. That Adam, Eve, Satan, and the apple might all be guilty, in various ways and perhaps in different degrees, was an idea he never entertained. By blaming the apple alone, he left no ground for moral judgment or even for moral speculation, and

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the result of that was, not that he got away from the making of moral judgments—he was always making such judgments, just as Marx and Lenin were—but that his bases of judgment were exempted from that process of constant examination and reexamination which alone can keep morality sweet.

By 1908 Steffens was convinced that all political evils could be traced to the system; by 1913 or 1914 he had accepted the Marxist idea of revolution; in 1919 he saw "the Future." His constant use of that phrase is terribly revealing: he believed that the shape of the future was already determined, that he knew what it was going to be, that he could recognize it when he saw it. Liberty, Lenin said, will come in two or three generations, and Steffens believed him. Other men, such as Bertrand Russell, went to Russia and guessed that the future would be something like what now exists, a constantly worsening tyranny. But Steffens brushed Russell off: "Russell is the most amazing failure to get it."

In the writings of some of Steffens's contemporaries—such as Russell, Morris Cohen, John Dewey—one finds a liberalism that is genuinely pluralistic and experimental. (It is well not to forget this; those whose "reexamination" of liberalism has led them only to other orthodoxies, other "solutions," are closer to Lincoln Steffens than they think.) However, the ordinary liberalism of the market place and the forum had a simple faith in the powers of reason, and tended to believe that social problems could be "solved." The liberal of the 20's was proud of his willingness to listen to other people's solutions, though as a rule he had solutions of his own; but it was in terms of solutions that he customarily thought, not in terms of a never-ending, many-sided struggle with a multiform and constantly changing reality.

IT WOULD be easy to say that much of what was called liberalism in the 20's and earlier did not deserve the name, that it was near-socialism or some other kind of quasi-radicalism, but I doubt that such an excursion into semantics would be profitable. It is better to take liberalism as we find it, recognizing that there are many varieties, and then say that by and large the liberalism that prevailed in the United States from 1900 to 1930 was too uncritical, too inflexible, and too unimaginative to cope with the complex realities of contemporary society. Hence many liberals, when confronted with a major economic and political crisis, had nothing with which to resist the appeal of a system of absolutes such as Communism.

The observation is pointed up by the case of Lincoln Steffens, who was in many ways so much more critical, flexible, and imaginative than most of his contemporaries. The case is the more significant because it is impossible to explain Steffens away in terms of personal interests or psychological compulsions. You cannot even say that he was panicked into Communism, for he was a Communist long before the depression. You have to grant that he came to Communism by using his mind, and that fact, from our present position and with our present perspective, serves to remind us how fallible an instrument the human mind can be.

The case of Lincoln Steffens is worth reviewing today, not as a warning against Communism—nothing could be less necessary than that—but as a warning against a type of mind that did not die in 1936, or 1939, or 1945. The quest for certainty is being carried on today with acute, and understandable, eagerness. Its more obvious forms are on the conservative side: the return to religious dogma, the recrudescence of laissez-faire, hysterical "Americanism." But there are also panaceas with liberal labels, and although most of the rank-and-file liberals, after burning their fingers in Stalin's fire, have learned to be skeptical, it is not so certain that they have learned to be critical in any bold, imaginative way. We are not likely to make Steffens's particular mistake, but who will say that we are safe from his kind of mistake?

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A Story

PRUDENCIO DE PEREDA

I THOUGHT, when I was young, that you worked according to your nationality. We were Spanish, and my father, grandfather, and uncles were all in the cigar business. There was a definite rule about this, I believed—a *law*. I thought so particularly during those times when I listened to my father and the other men of our family talk business, and heard them complain bitterly about the cigar business and about what a dishonorable trade it was, and how they were cursed the moment they took it up.

This used to surprise me—especially in regard to my father, because on the rare visits to his store it had seemed like a wonderful place. It had a broad, rich-looking, nickel-plated counter, neatly stacked with bright-colored boxes of cigars, and with shining hookahs and lighters along its top. The floor was white tile, and the inside wall of the store was a great mirror. The customers I'd seen had been well-dressed men with booming voices, rich gold chains around their full stomachs, and canes and gloves in their hands. There had been an air of wealth and strength in that store as I remembered it.

Still, my father was one of the most vehement in his denunciations of the cigar business. "Let them raise the blood to my face in shame," he once said, in his correct, intense Spanish, "if I permit any of my sons to go into this business. Yes. Let them do that!" I admired my father for his feelings, but felt that he was just talking, that my three brothers and I were all fated for the cigar business, just as my father and uncles had been. Indeed, even at this time, my older brother, who was only ten but figured himself a wise American, had already begun to do some special errands for my father. He would not only deliver boxes of cigars to the hotels in the neighborhood of my father's store in the Borough Hall section of Brooklyn, but would even take the elevated and go over the river and into the city to make deliveries.

When I begged him to tell me about this, he acted very casual and unafraid, and when, out of my genuine concern for him, I asked, "Aren't you going to be an aviator any more?" he said, "Sure! What's the matter with you? What d'you think I'm saving my money for?" I pitied him all the more, and worried myself inside for him. He was doomed—just as my father and uncles had been doomed. He would never be an aviator; nor would I ever be a bullfighter—and poor Justo would never have his big shoeshine parlor, or have his twin, Bifanio, as a sweeper. Bifanio hadn't made up his mind, yet, as to what he wanted to be, but the twins always did things together.

My older brother would never take me with him when he went on his errands. I was too young—though I was only two years younger than he. After we came home from school, he would put on his Sunday suit and new shoes and go down to my father's store on the trolley. I often wept as I pleaded with him to take me—just once, just this once! I didn't want to get into the cigar business, and was afraid of the city, but I would have

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risked anything to be allowed to ride on an elevated train.

My brother never relented, and my first experience in the cigar business came through an accident and without his help. It was something bigger than he'd ever done, and I should have felt boastful; instead, it filled me with terror and shame, and, at once, I understood the feelings of my father and the other men of our family.

How it happened was natural enough. Mother was making another try to have a girl, "a little sister," as she explained formally to us, and we three younger boys were farmed out. My older brother, Joe, stayed at home because he could do errands, make phone calls, and generally help around the house, and besides, as he explained to me, he was old enough to understand things. I didn't feel too bad, because I was going to Grandmother's and not to an aunt's, as the twins had. Going to Grandmother's had some responsibility, for there were always errands to be done and I would often have to act as translator. My grandmother spoke only about ten words of English, and my grandfather just a few more.

On the third day of my stay there—it was the Fourth of July—Grandfather had announced early that he wouldn't "go out" today. "Going out" meant going to work. My grandfather was in the most stigmatized form of the cigar business—he was a *teveriano* or "junk dealer," one of those itinerant salesmen who were scorned by the rest of the trade because they dealt completely in lies: in false labels, false representation, and false merchandise—very cheap cigars for which they secured exorbitant prices—and so brought still more disgrace to the Spaniards who had enough as it was by merely being in the legitimate cigar business.

I had heard all this at home—listening eagerly because the *teveriano* was certainly the most interesting of all the cigar men—but I'd never been able to connect the fabulous stories of *teverianos* with my mild, sad grandfather. For one thing, he was always very poor.

Grandmother didn't turn to look at him as she answered: "Do you observe American holidays, now?" She had a great dislike for everything American. She had been a great lady in Spain.

"One has to dance to the song they play," Grandfather said, shrugging his shoulders.

"And one has to pay the rent they ask!" Grandmother said this very sharply. I knew I should have left the room then, but I felt too sorry for my grandfather. He was growing very red. "We're at the fourth, now," Grandmother said. "That's five days late."

"I know that."

"Well?" Grandmother said, turning.

"I know that. I'm in accord with you. But not in front of the boy, please! Not in front of the boy, woman!"

"The boy knows it!"

"But not from me!" Grandfather stood up suddenly and came over to me. His hands were trembling. He took my arm and led me into the front parlor. He stood me by the window and sat down in the big chair. "Watch the celebrations!" he said. "Watch the celebrations!" I stared fixedly out the open window, knowing there weren't going to be any celebrations around here, but not wanting to tell my grandfather.

We stayed there only a short time, because the bell rang in a few moments—I couldn't see who it was—and quick, happy steps came up the stairs and we heard Agapito's voice greeting my grandmother. He called her "Dona," the most respectful title in Spanish, but he was laughing and warm as he talked.

Just as Grandfather was not, Agapito was the perfect example of the *teveriano*. He was still a very young man and had only been in America a short time, but he was easily the most famous—as well as the most criticized—of the salesmen. He was dressed that day as I imagined a *teveriano* would dress: a fine white linen suit, brown patent-leather shoes with button tops, a bright polka-dot bow tie, and a Panama straw with a multicolored band. When he came smiling into the front room, I thought he looked

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like the perfect man of the world, and he seemed to fill the room with brightness. He was very respectful to my grandfather, as he'd been to Grandmother, and when he suggested that they go out for a little bit, he said it in a quiet, serious voice. "We'll take the boy with us, yes?" he said, patting my shoulder and smiling at me. Agapito had neat white teeth and a small black mustache. He had a dark Spanish skin, and I thought he was very handsome. I'd always liked him, in spite of the stories I'd heard about him.

Grandfather answered Agapito's suggestion to go out by quietly shrugging his shoulders, but when Agapito suggested that they take me, his face took on the dark, stubborn look again.

"Yes, take the boy!" my grandmother called from the kitchen. "He hasn't been out. He may see some things. Holiday things." My grandfather shrugged his shoulders again.

WE TOOK a trolley—an open summer trolley—and we stayed on till the end of the line, and I saw that we'd come to the dock section. We could see the colored stacks of the big liners tied up at the piers. The big street was empty and quiet and that made the wonderful ships seem more intimate in the sun. Agapito kept pointing out things to me, but Grandfather walked along very quietly. He was dressed in his best black suit, with a black derby hat, and his face looked very worried. His black, drooping mustache made his face look very sad.

When we'd gone a few blocks, we turned into a side street and went into a small cigar store. I saw that this was Miguelin's. I knew Miguelin from seeing him at home and at the Spanish dances. He was a little, gray old man, and his store was dusty and old. He wrapped up seven new boxes of cigars for us, not wrapping them in brown paper but just with a heavy string so that you could see it was cigars and all the beautiful labels showed. Agapito gave him fourteen dollars. I counted them—and figured out that meant two dollars per box. Grandfather wanted to pay, but Agapito stopped him and made him put his wallet away. Agapito seemed to have charge of everything—he'd paid our fares on the trolley, too—and he would bend over and talk to Grandfather in a low voice while he patted him on the shoulder. I felt happy about this. I wanted my grandfather to lose his worry.

When we left Miguelin's, we turned to the big street again, and walked back the way we'd come. We walked very slowly, and Agapito kept talking to Grandfather and looking into each saloon that we passed. The saloons were the only places that were open today and there weren't many men in any of them. We were coming to a big one on the opposite corner, when Agapito said to my grandfather: "This one! This one seems good." The saloon had a big, bright shiny front and had a big hotel upstairs. I read the name "Monaghan" on the big sign over the swinging doors. As we crossed, Agapito took my hand firmly, and as we went in, I saw that the saloon was big and shiny and clean. It reminded me of my father's store. There was a big counter on one side with a great mirror on the wall and another counter on the other side with trays of food filling it all along. The tile floor was very clean and had no sawdust on it, and there was a big back room with tables that had white tablecloths.

Agapito stood inside the doorway, smiling and looking around as if he liked the place. Then, he led us over to the big counter with the mirror. We found a place easily because there were only a few men standing there, and Agapito placed the cigar boxes on the counter and nodded and smiled to the man behind the counter. He pointed to my grandfather and then to himself and said "Whiskey!" very plainly. He pronounced it "vhiskey." He patted me on the head, and smiled at the man again, and said, "Ginger ale!" He pronounced this well, except that he said "al" instead of "ale."

There was another man behind the counter, standing farther back. He had his jacket off and his sleeves rolled up, but he didn't have an apron on. He was a big man with

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a red face and he was smoking a big cigar. He had a gold chain across his vest and two big rings on his right hand, and he looked like one of my father's rich customers. When I stared at him, he winked at me and laughed. He'd been watching Agapito and my grandfather who were leaning on the big counter with their feet on the brass rail. Agapito had been talking in Spanish and laughing as he and my grandfather drank their whiskey.

The big man walked up to them slowly and patted the cigar boxes. Agapito turned his head up suddenly, in surprise, and then smiled at the big man and bowed to him.

"Havanas?" the big man said. He had a strong deep voice.

Agapito nodded quickly. "Yes! I am from Havana. I am from Havana."

"I mean the cigars," the big man said, laughing. He had brown teeth, but a nice face.

"Oh! Also, also!" Agapito said. He laughed and kept nodding his head. "From Havana, also. For my friend! I bring them." He pointed outside. "The ship! You understand? From Havana to Spain. I bring them to friend here. I stop off." He spoke in short spurts, but he pronounced very clearly. He stopped smiling and became very serious as he pulled one of the boxes out of the bundle, opened it with his little gold knife and picked out two cigars carefully. He handed them over to the big man and nodded vigorously when the big man seemed to hesitate.

"For Fourth of July!" Agapito said. He smiled again. "Happy Fourth of July!" He nodded and pressed the cigars into the man's hand.

The big man smelled the cigars and nodded to him. "Good flavor," he said. He turned and said something to the man in the apron and this man took the bottle and poured more whiskey into Agapito's and my grandfather's glasses. Agapito raised his glass to him, and then my grandfather did.

The big man kept smelling the cigars and then he patted the boxes again. "What would they cost?—How much?" he said, when Agapito looked puzzled. Agapito spread his hands. "For a friend," he said. "You understand. No. . . ." He made the motion with his hands again.

"Customs?" the big man said.

"Customs!" Agapito nodded quickly and smiled. He rubbed his hands. "No customs! Customs."

"Well, how much? How much, anyway?" The big man patted the boxes.

Agapito held a finger up, and turned to my grandfather. "This one seems to have money," he said in Spanish. "This one can pay."

"Take care, hombre," my grandfather said.

"No, don't disquiet yourself, Don Jose. I know what I'm doing." Agapito patted Grandfather's arm, turned to the big man and smiled. "My friend, here. He remember. He remember everything." He ran his finger up and down the boxes. "All the boxes. Seven! Sixty dollars. Cost for my friend."

SIXTY dollars! This was a shock to me—if a man buys seven boxes of cigars for fourteen dollars, two dollars per box, and sells them for—sixty dollars! I understood why the big man made such a face and then laughed. I hadn't minded all the lies that Agapito had told because I knew that *teverianos* worked like that, but when he asked this high, high figure, I got shocked and embarrassed—and then, very frightened for us. The glass felt heavy in my hand, and I held my head down because I knew that I was blushing.

I'd heard that *teverianos* asked robber prices, but I never thought that Agapito would take the chance today, when he had my grandfather and me with him. He was going to get us into trouble. He was making us take a chance—because he wanted to. And we were all going to get into trouble.

The big man said something to Agapito and Agapito said, "Well—you know, sir. Havanas!"

I didn't hear the big man answer but then Agapito said very brightly, "You interested? You interested in cigars?" I hated his accent, now. His lying.

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"I was looking for ten boxes. I could use ten boxes," the big man said slowly.

Agapito was talking in Spanish, then. He must have been talking to my grandfather. "You stay here," he said, still speaking respectfully. "I will run to Miguelin's and get three more boxes. I will run fast. You stay here. This is a good thing."

"Yes, hombre, it is," I heard my grandfather say. "Let him take these seven boxes and let us be through here. Let it stay a good thing."

"There is no danger," Agapito said quickly.

"If there is, entrust it to me," my grandfather said sternly and I looked up suddenly to see that his face had taken on the stubborn look again. "I wasn't thinking of that. I was thinking that we have a good thing. Let us take it, and be gone."

"I don't work like that," Agapito said. "You know that, Don Jose," he said more softly.

"Then, as you wish."

"You will stay?"

"As you wish!"

I watched, in rage but fascinated, as Agapito turned back to smile at the big man who was leaning on the counter with his old cigar in his mouth. Agapito brought his hands together. "We fix it," he said, and nodded. "Three more boxes, I will bring from the boat. For ten boxes"—he ran his fingers up and down the seven on the counter and held up three fingers—"ten boxes—for eighty dollars—for you!" He pointed at the big man.

The big man stared at Agapito for a moment, and then nodded and said, "Okay. Eighty dollars." What a fool this one is, too, I thought. His face looked stupid to me, now.

"You give me fifty dollars, now," Agapito said. He smiled. "I give money to guard—small money. You understand? My friend wait here, I come back. With three more."

Did Grandfather understand that? Did Grandfather know what Agapito was saying? I stared at his face, but couldn't see anything. I was weak with fright and fear, but I didn't dare say a word. The big man had taken out his wallet without hesitation and given Agapito five new bills—tens they must have been. Agapito smiled and nodded as he put them in his wallet quickly. He patted Grandfather on the arm, saying, "Don't worry yourself. I'll be back immediately," and then patted me on the head—I couldn't duck fast enough—and went out into the street.

I STARED at the floor. I wouldn't look at my grandfather. I'd finished the ginger ale, but I wouldn't go over to put the glass on the counter. I heard the big man say something to Grandfather that Grandfather didn't answer. "No speak English, eh?" the big man said, and laughed. He took up the bundle of cigars and moved down to the end of the counter—where I could see him by just lifting my eyes a little—and he began to open every box.

I had to look at my grandfather, then. Did he see what danger we were in? He was staring at the mirror. His hands were steady, but he was sweating. I glared at him, at first, but then wanted to cry. I went up and put the glass by his side and he looked down at me and then turned to stare up at the big man as he was opening each box. Then, he turned back, finished his drink in one slug and turned to me. His back was to the big man and he put his hand on my shoulder. I could smell the whiskey on his breath as he bent down. "Get thee out of here," he said. "Act as if thou art going out calmly." My grandfather always used the familiar "thee" with us, and his voice was calm and easy now but I could see that he was sweating badly. His hand felt very tight on my shoulder. "Get thyself to the trolley station. Stand by the trees there and wait for me. No matter how long, I will come. Do nothing but wait for me. I will escape this in some way. I will get out, and get to thee. I will escape this and get to thee. In whatever way, I will.

"Without crying, thee!" he said. "Without crying!" I hadn't started to cry yet, but my lip had begun to tremble. I bit my lip and

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started to shake my head even before he'd finished. "And think well of me," he was saying. "Think well of me. I did not want this situation for thee.Thou wilt not? Thou wilt not do it?"

"No. I stay. I stay here with you." His face had the stubborn look again and he pushed my shoulder but held his grip tightly on it. He glared at me, but I kept shaking my head. "Stay, then!" he said. "Stay!" He dropped his hand from my shoulder but reached to take my hand and then turned to lean on the bar again, holding my hand. A moment later, when he poured more whiskey into his glass, he did it with his left hand, but poured it very neatly. He lifted the glass in his left hand, and began to sip the whiskey slowly.

GRANDFATHER had been a waiter in Spain. He was very proud of that. He'd been a waiter at the best hotel in Tangier just before he'd come to the United States, and a prince, a duke, and two princesses had been among his patrons. My mother was born in Tangier, and, though she couldn't remember anything of her part in the life there, she told us many stories about it. The three years spent in Tangier had been the happiest time in the life of her family.

My grandmother's brother had come to the United States some years before and made an immediate success as a *teveriano*. He wrote glowing letters to my grandmother, telling her of the wonderful opportunities in the trade and urging her to make Jose, my grandfather, see reason and come to America. Does he want to be a waiter all his life? the brother would ask. He'd felt very bad when she'd married a waiter. He was her only brother and they were very close.

Grandfather was content. He didn't want to leave. The letters got more boastful, and then pleading. Finally, my granduncle sent enough money to pay first-class passage for all three and the pressure was too much for my grandfather. He consented, and he came to the United States with his family—to a tenement district in Hoboken, New Jersey. They moved to Brooklyn shortly after, when my aunt was born, but to a tenement district again, and they had never lived better than that. Grandfather—as Mother would say, in ending these stories—was just not a good salesman.

I was thinking these things as I gripped Grandfather's hand and stared up at him, and the anger that I'd felt before turned to pity. I love you, I thought. Once, I pulled his arm and said, "We could go to the bathroom—first me, then you—sneak out that way." He glared down at me with a stubborn look. "No. In no such manner. When we go, we go through the front door. We are men." He turned to stare at the mirror, but then turned quickly back to me. "Dost thou have to go to the toilet? Truly?"

I shook my head.

"Good!" he said, and turned to the mirror.

I thought we stood like that for a long time—it seemed like a long, long time to me—but Agapito said later that he'd only been gone sixteen minutes, that he'd counted them. Agapito's face was sweating when he came back, and his Panama was pushed back on his head, but he was smiling and looked very happy, and his clothes were still very neat. "I run! I run!" he said to the big man. "To ship. To ship and back!" He'd put the new boxes on the counter and was opening each one with his penknife and holding the open box up to the big man. The boxes looked very new and I thought that one of the labels looked wet. Surely, the big man would see, now. He would see the truth, now, I thought. And it would serve Agapito right. He'd be in it, now. Grandfather and I could run. We'd get away. Agapito was the one they'd hold.

The big man smelled every box and even touched the wet wrapper, but he nodded seriously and then stupidly took out his wallet and gave Agapito three more ten dollar bills. The man with the apron had filled Agapito's glass again and Agapito held out one of the bills to him, but he shook his head. Then, Agapito put the bills in his wallet and picked out a one-dollar bill that he folded and handed to the man in the apron. "For you," he said. "For you." He

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smiled and nodded. Then, he held up the whiskey, smiled and nodded again, and drank it in one gulp.

I had been tugging at Grandfather's hand, wanting to start, wanting us to go, but Grandfather held his tight grip and waited until Agapito had shaken hands with both men, and then he himself nodded to them, and we all turned towards the door.

We walked very slowly as we went outside and crossed the street. Grandfather wanted to walk fast, but Agapito was holding his arm and walking very slowly. "Don't worry yourself," he said, after a moment. "We'll turn down the first street. For now, we walk slowly—very slowly, and with dignity."

We turned down the first street, walked down that block, and then turned in the direction of the trolleys. As soon as we'd made this last turn, Agapito stopped and took out his wallet. He handed Grandfather three ten-dollar bills. Grandfather pushed them back. "Hombre!" he said, "don't embarrass me."

"Please!" Agapito said. "This is your share."

"It's too much."

"It's half. We were equally involved." Agapito pressed the bills into Grandfather's hand. "Equally!" he said, letting go.

Grandfather put the bills in his little black purse. "I'm very appreciative. Very!" he said.

"For nothing!" Agapito said. "For nothing!" As we walked, now, he was smiling and happy again. He took off his hat and rubbed his face with a big silk handkerchief. "One has to see these things, Don Jose. One has to see them. To believe them, one has to see them. Havanas!" he shook his head and laughed. "And you mustn't feel that we cheat them!" he said, when Grandfather didn't answer. "This one buys them as Havanas. He gives them out as Havanas—probably at some festival—and those who take them, take them as Havanas, and smoke them. No matter how bad the cigars, for them they are Havanas. Yes, Don Jose. We sell Havanas—they buy Havanas!"

On the trolley, after he'd paid our fares, Agapito slipped a half dollar into the conductor's pocket. "For Fourth of July!" he said. The conductor blushed, and nodded. Later, Agapito stood up and took off his hat. "Life for the United States of America!" he called out. "Happy Fourth of July to everybody!" The two people who were sitting up at the front end of the trolley smiled and shook their heads. They thought he was drunk.

AGAPITO left, soon after we got home. Then, Grandmother went out. "I'll get some ham," she said. "We'll eat well, tonight." Grandfather and I were in the front room, and she'd come to the door. "The delicatessen has good ham."

Grandfather nodded. "We're most fortunate," he said, without looking up. "Most fortunate."

Grandmother turned back and stared at him with a cold face. She was dressed in her black skirt and black silk waist, and she looked like the pictures of the Queen Mother in the Spanish magazines we had, except that Grandmother was much more beautiful. "Yes," she said, in a calm voice. "Most fortunate. You, in particular! You needn't go out for some days, now. Perhaps grow a beard, here."

Grandfather got very red, but didn't look up. He shrugged his shoulders as Grandmother turned and went out. After a moment, he reached over to me and pulled me to the side of the chair. He kept his arm around me and patted my head. "Thou!" he said. He looked straight at me. "Thou must forget what thou heardst today, what thou sawst. All of it! Forget especially what thy grandmother said. She is a fine woman. Nothing of today was like her. It is I who am weak. The fault is mine. Thou wilt understand this some day. Thou wilt, yes. What thou must remember is this"—he pressed my shoulder—"that thou must be strong. Remember that! Let no woman—whether she be thy mother who is my own flesh, or the woman thou wilt marry—let none of them press thee or influence thee in

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choosing thy profession. Thou, thou alone, must move through the world to make thy money, thou alone must suffer—so thou must choose. And hold to that!

"Thou art the bullfighter, no?"

"Or one who guides an elevated train," I said. "One of those."

"Good. Thou might change, but whatever thou shouldst choose—hold to it. Grip it well."

I nodded.

"Dost thou know what she referred to in that of the beard?" he said, in a softer voice.

"No, Grandfather," I lied.

"Well, it was this: I had a fine beard when I was a waiter in Tangier. It was a full, well-cut beard and I was a fine figure with it. One afternoon, the major-domo—he who was chief of all our waiters—the major-domo, Don Felix, came to me and said, 'Jose, you must shave that beard. Too many patrons are coming in and talking to you and treating you as the major-domo. I regret this, but you must shave it, because there is only one major-domo here, and it is me. No one else can look like a major-domo. No one else will.'

"I went home to thy grandmother and told her this, and she said, 'Yes. The man has reason. You must shave your beard.' I had thought that she would have objections, that she would show anger. I had thought that she loved the beard as I did—it was a fine beard. But she did not—or, if she did, she would not let it stand before Don Felix's objection.

"So, I cut it off!" my grandfather said. He brushed his hand under his chin. "That was a mistake. I should have held to my first thought. I should have defended myself. I should have left my place and sought another job in Tangier—or Gibraltar or La Linea where there are fine hotels. *I* was doing the waiting, and *I* should have thought of *myself*." He stopped and stared at me. "Thou seest?" he said. "Stop thou at the first mistake. Stop there."

I nodded, and he pressed my shoulder again and then reached over and lifted me on to his lap. He cradled my head on his shoulder and rocked slowly back and forth. "We must gladden ourselves," he said, "before she comes. We must gladden ourselves and be smiling. This is difficult for her, too. Difficult. We must gladden ourselves, now. Yes! We must gladden ourselves for her."

I was nodding my head to say, Yes, when my forehead felt something wet, and I looked up and saw that the tears were falling down his cheeks.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

HERITAGE

Trophies of the Family Saga

SHLOMO KATZ

THE small narrow room overhanging the stairway used to be a bedroom. Its single small window is only about four feet from the blank wall of the adjoining house and the air within it may not have been completely changed since the house was built. But many years ago, before the family had dispersed throughout the country, it had to serve. An immigrant family of six—there was no help for it; every square inch had to be used. When the parents finally remained alone, this small room gradually took on the functions of an attic, storeroom, and—whenever one of the scattered flock came back for a visit—guest bedroom. Every time I briefly visit my parents in St. Paul almost the same scene is enacted in that room on the day before my departure.

The first few days of the visit—or rather the hour or two each day that I spend with my parents—are full of questions, attempts at conversation, and food. The questions are nearly all impersonal. The "old generation" learned a long time ago not to ask personal questions. The "younger generation" is always right in whatever it does. Aren't they educated? Haven't they seen the world? Even when they are wrong they are right and an old person must neither question their inscrutable ways nor inquire too closely into their doings. After the few brief, permissible inquiries about health, the talk runs somewhat as follows: "What do they say in New York? Will there be a war?" Or: "Such a calamity! Floods in the country. No wonder prices are going up."

I try to classify in my mind what "they say in New York" in order to provide some answer, and I find it difficult. Who speaks for New York? The editorial in the *Times* or in the *News*? My landlord who insists that there will be no war and that "those Bolsheviks in Albany and Washington" should be forced at once to do away with rent controls, or my neighbor at the *Stammtisch* in the Waldorf Cafeteria who has it figured out to the minute and the inch when and where the next businesslike (not for purposes of diverting rivers in Siberia) atom bomb will be dropped?

I try to get at the source of my parents' information about the floods. The Ohio, it is true, had been on a rampage, but that was weeks earlier. When I ask where they heard about the flood, a faint resentment comes into my mother's voice. "Don't you think we know what the papers say?" It turns out that a member of the one congregation of now scarcely more than ten that still holds daily services in a synagogue on the West Side was a subscriber to the Jewish *Morning Journal*. He read it regularly but not always consecutively and repeated the news to his colleagues in the house of prayer. His report about the flooding of the Ohio thus reached

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THE debris of history and life is stored in those three trunks in the unused guest room, and must be reexamined annually in a ritual that remains the firmest point of contact between generations. SHLOMO KATZ, managing editor of *Jewish Frontier*, was born in the Ukraine and came to the United States as a child; the "heritage" he inventories here will be recognized by many as not greatly unlike their own. His most recent contribution to our pages was "Miss O'Keefe's Children," published in this department in September 1950.

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its limited audience weeks after the event. I hasten to reassure them about the flood. The conversation lamely proceeds from one subject to another. The gap of years is in the way, and the still greater gap of estrangement.

Then there is the food, with the meal a pathetic version of the prodigal son and the fatted calf. No sooner do I enter than the entreaties begin: "Eat something." I assure them I am far from starved. They don't believe me. After a trip? Such a trip too! As with most old people, their memory vaults over the immediate present and the recent past to the far time when any trip meant a journey of at least a day for which one had to prepare adequately—with, among other things, a basket of food conveniently tucked away in the straw in the wagon.

The proffers of food have many overtones. They are an outstretched hand of reconciliation between generations, an attempt to do something in common, for the table is really an altar and when three sit at a table and there is good will among them the divine spirit hovers over them. The insistence on food is also a covert attempt to reassert authority. The "child"—whatever its age—must be looked after.

I give in and "eat something." But they are not satisfied, for I do not eat enough. If they had their way I would eat constantly and ask for more. It is a problem in group psychology, I think. I am reminded of the distasteful and indelicate superabundance of Jewish restaurants, the staggering mounds of food in delicatessen stores in Jewish neighborhoods, the endearing diminutives applied to a *gut shtikele* ("fine piece of") something or other. I can't help thinking that a similar diminutive of endearment used to be applied to a child's mental capacities; then it was said that he had a *"gut kepel"* ("good head"). Wasn't there originally something very tender and self-contradictory in the exaggerated concern for the eating habits of the children? It was necessary that the children should be sufficiently buttressed against the hostile world. And yet at the same time it was proper that they be not too well developed physically, for weakness was also a symptom of spirituality: the *"shvach"* ("weak") child was also the delicate, sensitive, and scholarly one. And, after all, spirituality and scholarliness came first: to give up these would have meant bowing to the values of the enemy world—a final and fatal surrender. So, while the "weak" and other-worldly child was plied with food at every turn, he was never asked to learn to fight and no effort was made to encourage even his more safely aggressive urges. Indeed, what profiteth it a man if he win the world and lose himself?

"You've lost weight; you are so thin," Mother says. I have not lost weight; but I don't argue. While chiding me it is her intention to compliment me also. Having lost weight means I have gained in the finer qualities of the spirit.

SOME time during the day preceding my departure I am asked obliquely: "Would you care to go through the things in the small room?" Then, by way of explanation: "There may be some things that can be thrown away."

I consent. I would go through "the things" even if I were not asked to do so.

"The things" fill three cardboard boxes and are the accumulations of a lifetime. Each year some of the acquisitions whose sentimental value was not great were discarded —school report cards, textbooks, old notebooks and similar documents, as well as articles of wear and household use. Some were thrown away with no more than a slight pang of nostalgia; others caused a considerable emotional wrench. A natural process of selection had its way and the things that survived the wastebasket were no longer likely to be discarded. But the reexamination of the permanent collection took place regularly. The invitation to go through "the things" was in the nature of an annual communion with the "usable past."

The term "usable" is hardly correct, but the objects in those cardboard boxes do represent a segment of the past. One can only marvel at the inner logic of the process of selection which preserved such a strange conglomerate of articles and documents. At times the logic becomes apparent. Of what value, indeed, are high school and college textbooks or report cards of twenty-five years ago when compared with an ancient birth certificate signed by an "official rabbi," now that the particular rabbi in question, the entire institution of "official rabbis," and even the town where he once officiated, are no longer in existence?

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No surprises await me. I know exactly what is in those boxes and where each item lies. But there is always a certain newness about the experience, perhaps because the things have grown older by one year, and have therefore become more venerable and of clearer historical validity.

I know that the prize, the bundle of documents tied in a large kerchief, is at the bottom of the box in the corner. But the ritual must be gone through in proper order. Also there is always a faint possibility of discovering something new in the accumulation of objects, something not new as an object but with a new meaning.

I BEGIN with the box of clothes. Mother provides a running commentary; I know it by heart yet I do not find it boring. On top and half filling the box is Father's winter overcoat, the one made of black cloth and lined with fox skins. "These days," Mother says, "everything is junk. Nothing lasts. Just look at this coat, it's still good." I know what she means. Her parents had ordered the coat as a wedding present for Father. That was more than fifty years ago. Once, about twenty-five years later, it received a new cloth outside as a gift from new in-laws. It still does duty in the frosts of St. Paul. The fox skins, it is true, are getting quite bald, but when Father puts it on and turns up its huge collar, even Minnesota's winters are powerless against it.

When I made the coat's acquaintance it was already about thirty years old. During the winters in the Ukraine, when it was too cold for the smaller children to play outside and Father was at home, we used to stand the coat up like a tent and play hide and seek around it. At night, when the built-in oven failed to give enough heat, it became an extra quilt.

The chief movable wealth of the family consisted of three items: a large number of books, the silver, and the coat—the *tulup* as it was called. During the pogroms and pogrom-scares that abounded immediately after World War I, the last two items were always hidden away at the first disquieting rumors. The books were too bulky to move and, furthermore, *pogromchiks* were not interested in books. Then the Bolsheviks came to town. Life was safe again, for the moment. They were welcomed. But they had their ideas of sharing the wealth, and individual soldiers felt it would be accounted a good deed to deprive a bourgeois of a heavy fur coat, even one in the fourth decade of its life. They were also establishing a public library in town, and any household with more than a handful of books was made to contribute its literary possessions for the public welfare. The searchers naturally helped themselves to whatever else caught their eye. As the search committee began its work at the end of the street the silver was quickly hidden away and Father put on his coat and went for a walk in the orchards that bordered the town. The committee came to the house. Their literacy was not of the highest order and they were dubious about the revolutionary quality of some of the books. One of them struggled with the name Nietzsche. He transposed the clumsy consonants and read it as "Nishchi"—"the poor," in Russian. "Frederick the Poor" struck him as particularly appropriate class-conscious stuff for the new library. The books were loaded on a wagon. The search committee was given tea and smiles; they might take books and other belongings, but when they were around there were no pogroms. As soon as they left I was sent to call Father. The coat was safe.

Nearly everything else was abandoned on the trip to America, but not the coat. Over the long journey it served as coat, blanket, mattress, pillow. Then spots began to appear in the fur. But it held up.

"Yes," Mother says as I put the coat aside, "they used to make good clothes once, but not any more." She begins telling a story to illustrate her point. I do not listen. The first box is still half full.

Several other articles of winter apparel nearly account for the rest of the space in the box. Reaching the bottom, I lift out a circular piece of bright yellow damask, frayed at the edges and covered with stains. "A human being is such a fool," she says, "clinging like this to rags. Better throw this away. Why should it lie around?"

This time I object. This is a cape that was part of her wedding dress. How it came to be brought to America I don't know, but since it has been preserved all these years, why throw it out now?

ONCE before, when I was similarly engaged in going through "the things," she had

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talked about it: "It is the cape from my wedding dress. When Father was taken into the army and I was left alone with a child on my hands, I cut it up to make a dress for G. But the cape was left. It was a style like that when I was married."

"Everybody else managed to stay out and not serve *Fonia,* only he had to be taken," she said, and her bitterness at my father's failure to evade service in the Czar's army was as fresh as if it had happened the day before.

As a matter of fact it wasn't true that he was the only one taken. Many Jews in town were drafted. But some took extreme measures, even to the extent of crippling themselves, to evade serving in the Russian army. He refused to take such drastic measures.

It occurs to me that my father's army service took place in the 90's of the past century. Every history book now has at least a hundred pages after that period. But my mother's resentment has not abated a whit, and the sight of the ancient bit of bright yellow cloth revives it. Many times I suspected that Father had had a secret liking for military service despite the severe handicaps that a Jew had to labor under in the czarist army. To him it had been an opportunity to assert himself as a Jew. She only remembered that he had not been as quick as some others in avoiding military service.

When we were children he used to talk about his four years of service, and there was a note of pride in his voice. His victories had been small. It had been a battle of simple, enduring faith against a wicked oppressor. There was the time when a particularly vicious and anti-Semitic lieutenant tried to make life more than normally miserable for his Jewish charges. He especially tried to trick them into breaking regulations when they were on guard duty, for then the punishment would be severe and Jewish soldiers as a group could be blamed for laziness and inefficiency. "One night when I was on sentry duty," Father told us, "this lieutenant wrapped himself in a wolf skin he had. He thought that he could sneak up unnoticed and grab my rifle from me. It was a very serious offense to lose one's rifle. But I detected him as he crawled up in the dark and I let him have it with the butt. He hollered out who he was but until he managed to disentangle himself from his wolf skin I gave him a good beating. When he finally stood up I came to attention and saluted. There was nothing he could do to me and he was afraid the other officers might laugh at him, so he didn't even report me. After that he left us Jewish soldiers alone."

Other triumphs were of a more sublimated nature: getting up half an hour before reveille each morning to pray in shawl and phylacteries, despite the angry murmuring of the Russian soldiers at being disturbed; performing all the arduous and tiring duties without eating pork and other meat rations; walking many miles to the nearest town on an occasional weekend off for the privilege of praying in a synagogue and eating kosher meals in a Jewish home. Then there was the time when he was sent on some mission that required considerable presence of mind. Two other soldiers had been sent before him and had failed. He succeeded and the major gave him a five-ruble gold piece. A Jewish soldier could not be given rank, so money had to take its place. But why bother about rank—his self-esteem as a Jewish soldier had been given a boost. Let the *goyim* keep their rank.

These were victories of which he spoke for many years after. But Mother could not share in them. She only remembered that she had been left alone.

"So I cut up the wedding dress to make a dress for G. And then every year I used to make it over and shorten it and fix it up for the other girls as they became big enough to wear it. Six times I made it over. But the cape remained. I don't know what made me take it when we went to America. But we were in such a hurry. Some things that should have been taken were forgotten and other things, useless rags, were brought along."

WE WERE in such a hurry. Relatives, neighbors, friends came to say goodbye and hurried us along. There were rumors of an impending pogrom that spring of 1921. A day delayed and all might be lost. But I myself was in no hurry. I would have liked to enjoy a few days longer the glory of my impending Americanism and boast before my ten-year-old friends how I no longer had to bother with Russian declensions. Who needed Russian in America? But still they kept coming and telling us to hurry. They

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came to buy household belongings and hurried us. They came to bestow tearful kisses of parting and urged haste. They brought small gifts for the trip and pushed us on. The gifts consisted mostly of food. One well-meaning soul brought a string of garlic. "They are good against seasickness," she said. She herself had never been to sea. The garlic was wrapped pell-mell into a bundle together with a lot of other odds and ends, and somewhere among the hastily packed belongings the cape was included. The soldiers who helped to smuggle us across the frontier searched everyone thoroughly at the border. Garlic was an item of food, so they took it. They had no use for the bright yellow cape from a 19th-century dress.

The first box is empty and I carefully replace the things, leaving the big coat on top. It can do service again next winter.

"Rest a while," Mother urges before I begin on the second box. "There is no hurry. Maybe you'll have a bite to eat," she tries tentatively. "Such a long trip ahead of you."

But I tackle the second box, somewhat smaller than the first. Once it was filled with discarded school books as one member of the family after another added his accumulation of unsold or unexchanged texts. But most of these had been disposed of. Now in the upper part of the box is the metal base of a small table lamp, a spare electric iron so long unused that it is doubtful whether its coil is still in working order, a folding yardstick, and similar gadgets once bought and used and now retired. I suggest throwing them away now, but my mother says, "They may come in handy some day."

Beneath these are several *Mahzors* (prayer books for the holidays), a set of the Bible with commentaries, other religious volumes. Father's eyesight has been failing and he can no longer use them. Moreover he knows every word of them by heart. The Bible set is bound in parchment and in good shape. The prayer books on the other hand are dog-eared and falling apart. "Let me buy you some new ones," I suggest. She won't hear of it. "Besides," she says, "where will you get them here in town?"

These books are among the first things my father bought when he got to America. The volumes still bear the purple oval imprint "Lebanon," the emporium on Fairfield Avenue which specialized in wholesale *matzah* distribution, religious books and other items pertaining to worship, Yiddish newspapers, and also a line of delicatessen and groceries. Lebanon was not only a book and delicatessen store; it was also a social center for new immigrants on the West Side. Now Lebanon is no more. The owner is dead, and his emporium in new hands is a prosaic grocery store. "There is someone in the city who sells prayer books, but he lives far away. But why should you bother? These are good enough. Last Rosh Hashanah I almost lost the Mahzor. The second day of Rosh Hashanah was on a Saturday so I asked a little boy to carry it home for me. On the way he met some other children and did not bring it to the house. But some days later his mother returned it to me. Things don't get lost and these are good enough."

Things don't get lost, she said, and I was reminded of the curious formula which as pupils of the *cheder* in the Ukraine we were taught to write in our best calligraphy inside the cover of any new book: "This book belongs. . . . To whom does it belong? . . . It belongs to whomever it belongs to. . . . Nevertheless, to whom does it belong? . . . It belongs to. . . ." followed by the name of the proud possessor. No one knew who authored this evasive version of *ex libris*.

Father comes in as I begin on the third and last box. His *tallis* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (phylacteries) are on top for easy access every morning. "Do you still have your *tefillin*?" he asks. I nod assent. "Do you use them?" I maintain a discreet silence. Mother intervenes, fearful that the younger generation might feel offended: "Stop bothering him with your questions. All of a sudden he's inquisitive." She addresses no one in particular. "He knows what he has to do without your reminding him." The younger generation always knows best. How much heartbreak through the years must have gone into the shaping of this state of resigned approval. Father stands rebuked but unyielding. "But you do have them yet?" he asks again. I shake my head in confirmation. I see that he doubts my word but prefers to ask no more.

Beneath the prayer shawl is a thick layer of photographs and receipts of all sorts—receipts for rent, from the electric company, from doctors and hospitals. I know better

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than to suggest that some or all of these be thrown away. Once I did make such a suggestion and it was vetoed without any ado. The reasons were not explicitly stated but the firmness on the subject could have been formulated somewhat as follows: Assuming that no one is likely ever to ask for these receipts it is nevertheless possible that one may be called upon to prove that the rent for the month of February of six years ago was paid. One may, at any time, be asked to give an account of oneself on earth as well as in heaven. The proof of innocence and of duty performed must be at hand always. With the photographs it is a different matter. I feel impelled to look at each one of them. They are nearly all of relatives in Europe. The "American" photographs are on the walls. During the first years in this country there was a fairly intensive interchange of letters with those who remained behind. As the years passed it slackened until the trickle of communication dried up almost entirely. Now the poorly developed pictures yellowing with age are the only remaining contact with that remote world.

The faces on the pictures already say very little. Only at rare intervals does one of the faded images evoke any appreciable emotional response. But though the likenesses themselves have ceased to be moving because time has blurred their features, the people they represent still have a claim on the emotions. This one is still alive but long not heard from, another died, these three perished at the hands of the Nazis, two others are lost without trace. Thus it goes through the entire collection. Strange faces of lost people, faded images reposing in a cardboard box in the corner of the small room.

Only one thing remains in the box—the bundle of documents tied in the large kerchief. I lift it out and gingerly untie the square knot. It is always something of a thrill to go through these papers. It gives me a vague feeling of anticipation, like that of an archeologist examining a new find of ancient tablets.

THE pile of papers spills over sideways on the table. At the bottom is a huge sheet folded in four. It is the passport on which the family entered the country. It is cracked apart at the creases and one side is covered with stamps and transit visas.

It was 1921 and we were already safely in Bessarabia. Together with hundreds of other refugees we stayed in the women's section of a synagogue which had been made available for the exiles from Russia. The pews had been taken out and hundreds of cots placed one next to the other. Families, children, single men and women slept next to each other with but an occasional blanket as partition.

In the middle of the hall several wood-burning stoves had been put up and were used for cooking. Before dawn we would be awakened by the plaintive chanting of the Psalms in the main section of the synagogue below. Babies cried, women stirred about the stoves preparing breakfast and quarreling over their turns at the fire. Later in the day the men went about the city looking for work and consulting the "delegates."

The "delegates" were mysterious creatures sent by relatives of the refugees to facilitate their coming to America. They transmitted money allotments from the United States, helped in obtaining visas, arranged for transportation. We had a fancy "delegate." He stayed in the best hotel in Kishinev, a building that made an indelible impression on me with its four stories and elevator shaft but no elevator. He wore horn-rimmed glasses and always received his clients in shirt sleeves and wearing suspenders. Up to that time we had never seen horn-rimmed glasses. Where we came from, intellectuals—such as teachers and pharmacists—wore pince-nez on a thin black silken cord and never went about in their shirt sleeves. But Americans were different. It was even said that he was a graduate of an American university. One can't be a stickler for form with the great of this world.

After months of promises and encouragement he suddenly informed us that we could not get a visa to the United States because the Soviet government still had not been recognized and we had no passports, but he promised, not very convincingly, to fix matters up. More months passed. At length father was sent to Bucharest and was there provided with the huge sheet of paper, made out by some officials of the czarist regime. The American consul promised to honor it. We got our visas. The "delegate" was all-powerful, despite his shirt sleeves and suspenders.

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Years later I came across the "delegate" in New York. He sat behind a desk in a small bank. The location of his desk indicated that he was far from being a power in the institution. He wore the same kind of horn-rimmed glasses. But he was not in shirt sleeves. For a moment I doubted that it was really he. I went up closer. I recognized the face, and there was the name plate before him to dispel all doubt. *Sic transit. . . .*

The passport is always interesting if only because the family photograph is pinned to it—the first in which I ever figured. Taking it was quite an occasion and also one that lasted an unbearably long time. After duly slow-freezing us into the desired posture the photographer communed with himself behind his black cloth for what seemed like an hour. I nearly bit through my tongue trying not to laugh. The result was that on the picture my mouth is pursed into a tube. The others did better and when the end product was shown around among other refugees it met with complete approval. "A good picture; *nu,* worried Jewish faces," they said. "May you have luck in America." Everything was as it should be. The child was *"shvach,"* the adults had truly Jewish worry on their face. It would be a genuine passport, though signed by a displaced czarist official without authority.

Next to the passport repose the affidavits sent by the American relatives undertaking responsibility for our not becoming public charges. In triplicate, notarized, and with a blue heavy paper backing, they look as impressive today as they did thirty years ago. With the affidavits had come a letter from the relatives explaining their significance. The message was written on a letterhead showing a skyscraper in the upper left hand corner. We looked at it with awe. Could that building really be theirs?

Disillusionment was not long in coming. They did not own this or any other building. But there was a grain of truth in the picture. There was such a building in St. Paul. Months later I faced it and recognized it. The President was stopping in St. Paul for a day and was lodged in the "presidential suite" of the best hotel in the city. I went to gaze from afar at the building thus made historic. It was our old friend of the letterhead. There was no bitterness among our family on the subject. For a little while it had aroused such wild dreams. If our relatives did not own the huge hotel, one of them must have had lunch in it at least once—though he may have merely gone into the lobby to write the letter and taken a piece of the stationery.

Documents and more documents, ancient pieces of paper, stamped and countersigned, refusing petitions, granting approval, giving instructions, classifying by name, number, age, sex, employment, destination, origin. All of them are answers to questions once asked. Now the questions have long been forgotten but the answers still lie wrapped in the big kerchief at the bottom of the cardboard box. Next to the affidavits are Father's naturalization papers taken out many years ago. He is a patriarchal-looking man with a long white beard. "You are not an anarchist?" he was asked, and even the questioner must have smiled at the absurdity of the question. Yet questions must be asked and answers must be given. Bakunin, too, had a beard, and so did Marx.

Some old letters in their torn envelopes lie next to the naturalization papers. The most recent is more than twenty years old. They have been saved because of the return addresses. Father had quoted the Talmud: "Mountains don't meet, people do. Let us keep the addresses, just in case. . . ." One is from a man who came on the same ship. He went to California and in his letter he complained of his lot and asked whether he might not do better in St. Paul. A second is from some distant relatives who had taken up their abode in New York and urged that we too move there. "Millions of people make a living in New York, why should you settle in *oisraisenish?*"—that is, in a place torn out of the context of human habitation.

Still another letter is from a fellow refugee from our native town. During the many weeks that his family and ours squatted in the women's section of the synagogue there were numerous and heated discussions about where to go. He had chosen Palestine. "I know it's poor and small and there are Arabs," he used to argue, "but enough. I want to go to a Jewish country." (I was inclined to agree with him in a general way, but personally I wanted to go to America: the trip was longer.) He did go and for a few years a thin trickle of communication was maintained. He was satisfied with his choice,

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but in his last letter he added nostalgically: "There is one thing I envy you—that you have snow in the winter. I am happy and I never regretted the choice I made even though life is hard here, but every now and then I get homesick for good, deep snow in the winter." I wonder if he ever got over his homesickness. Letters from acquaintances in Israel inform me that one of his grandsons born in that country is now a high-ranking officer in the Israeli army. I conveyed this news to Father. He said nothing. But I wondered whether he did not wish to ask, "Why didn't you become a high-ranking officer in the American army?" I may have been wrong; though his eyes were fixed on my arm, he may only have been thinking of the *tefillin,* not of the corporal's stripes.

"THAT'S nothing," Mother says as I pick up the next piece of faded paper. I quickly replace it. It is the *ketubah,* her marriage contract, and even at this late age she acts self-conscious about it. If old people could, I think she would blush. I once tried to read it. The ink is faded almost to illegibility, the script is fanciful and hard to decipher, the Aramaic is virtually a sealed book to me.

There is also a bunch of diplomas, one from grammar school, three from high school, and a number of certificates from various evening courses. Among these there is also one small certificate from the Hebrew school which lasted for one brief summer in our town in the Ukraine. It is handwritten and only the single word "diploma" on top is printed.

The Bolsheviks had come and new winds began to blow. A trained Hebrew teacher appeared from some big city and, utilizing such local talent as was available, he established a Hebrew school with a regular curriculum and well-organized classes for the children between nine and twelve. The school was a success and we loved it. But autumn came, the Bolshevik authorities frowned on the idea of a Hebrew school, and there were rumors of pogroms. The families of many of the pupils fled or thought of flight abroad. The teachers, too, prepared to emigrate. Our class, the oldest, was disbanded and we were given these diplomas—the first diplomas we had ever had. There were no facilities for printing these documents, but in order to lend them a greater degree of authority and thus enhance their value in our eyes, a few letters of Hebrew type were obtained somewhere and the word *Teuda*—diploma—was printed on top. With our ingrained attitude of reverence for the printed word, especially print in the "holy tongue," that one word was enough to give the small piece of paper a magic quality.

When the class was disbanded, the departing teacher organized those of us who were to remain behind into a Hebrew-speaking group. We met regularly all through that winter. Our Hebrew was a bit halting, it is true, but we made up for it in enthusiasm. For one thing, we had an organization of our own at a time when the very word "organization" was a charm. Then, too, we had to fight for our existence. The meetings were held in private homes and on the day we gathered it was our duty to scrounge around for fuel—sticks, branches, straw, reeds, anything that would burn—to warm the house in which we met. Very soon we acquired still another incentive—the disapproval of the Bolshevik authorities. We were in a revolutionary mood. There was revolution all around us. What could be more revolutionary than to say yea when the authorities, real, genuine city authorities, said nay?

The brother of one of our members was a power in the local "revcom"—the revolutionary committee. This brother appeared at one of our meetings and told us, kindly but firmly, to dissolve our organization. There were more important things for boys to do in a Bolshevik-ruled town than speak Hebrew once a week, he said. We refused and decided that henceforth we would speak Hebrew whenever we met each other. The next time the commissar's kid brother came to the meeting there were outcries of: "Spy! He is a spy! Kick him out!" Then and there some sort of trial was held and it was decided to exclude him from membership because he told our "secrets" to his brother the commissar. The boy denied tattling. He was expelled just the same. Out of spite he said he'd tell his brother "all about us" and that from now on he would be a Bolshevik. We were ordered bluntly to dissolve our children's group. In reply we staged a protest before the office of the local "revcom." Somebody dashed out with a broom and chased us away. We scattered, our loyalty to Hebrew

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greater than ever as a result of this persecution. Alas, it did not last long.

The leader of our group, the one who was first to shout "Spy!" and to lead the demonstration against the "revcom," was a boy whose father, a man named Velvel, had been murdered in a pogrom the previous year. The son always took the lead in our Hebrew group; it was as if he had vowed to his martyred father to remain true to his people, its past, its culture. But several years after we came to America we received a letter from someone in our town, with this postscript attached:

"Do you remember N., the son of Velvel who was killed in the pogrom? He is now a fanatical Communist and he has already reported to the Cheka a number of secret Zionists in town and they were exiled to Siberia. He is now a big shot in the local administration and when one speaks to N. Vladimirovitch it's best to be careful." N. Vladimirovitch—from Velvel to Vladimir. Vladimir means "rule the world": the martyred father had attained a strange posthumous triumph.

"ENOUGH, enough," says Mother. "Do me a favor and have a bite of something. Tomorrow you have to go on a long trip."

I am almost finished going through "the things." Only a few old birth certificates remain. They had been thought lost for a long time. Then they were accidentally rediscovered after many years and I found out that I had been using the wrong date for my birthday. At home we had naturally used the Jewish calendar for such occasions as birthdays and death anniversaries. When first asked in America what my birthday was, I guessed at it as closely as I could. The rediscovered birth certificate showed that I was more than a week off. I was not quite the same person as the boy who pursed his lips so hard in order not to laugh when posing for the passport photograph.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

TOWARD A NEW JEWISH LEARNING

The Alienated Seek a Way Home

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

WHEN, in 1919, Franz Rosenzweig—then thirty-three years old—returned from war service and finished his magnum opus, *Der Stern der Erlösung* ("The Star of Redemption"), he decided to resist the temptation to write more books, and devoted himself instead to the reconstruction of Jewish higher education in his native Germany. The Frankfort Jewish community gave the young and relatively unknown thinker a chance to try out his novel approach to Jewish studies. The Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus, technically a continuation of the then existing conventional lecture series, was actually a creation of Rosenzweig's.

The "new learning," introduced by Rosenzweig with the simplicity of a great idea, was to lead the student "from the periphery to the core." It carefully avoided the pitfalls of apologetics, partisanship, dogmatism. All that was needed was an open mind willing to reconsider the classical Jewish books. Here "specialists," "experts" in Judaism were out of place; rabbis were rarely invited to teach.

Rosenzweig fully realized the power of modern secular ideas to give the Jew an intellectual home in the modern world; yet he was convinced that there was a way to accept Judaism in its totality without sacrificing either one's intellectual responsibility or inner freedom. This union of modernity and Judaism—a concept which cannot be reduced to a short formula—is Rosenzweig's distinctive contribution to 20th-century Jewish thought.

An attack of paralysis forced Rosenzweig, in 1923, to withdraw from active leadership in the Lehrhaus; at that time the enrollment was 1,100 students, out of a Jewish population of about 26,000. Rosenzweig had to abandon the medium of the living word and return to "mere" writing. The Lehrhaus discontinued its work in 1926; but it was reopened in 1933 under the leadership of Martin Buber.

THE following is a draft of the address that Rosenzweig prepared for the opening assembly (which the present writer was fortunate enough to attend) on October 17, 1920. It was first printed, posthumously, in 1934 in the *Almanach des Schocken Verlags*. The English text is taken from a Franz Rosenzweig anthology which is being prepared for publication.

—NAHUM N. GLATZER

TODAY, as the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus opens its doors to carry on the series of Jewish adult education courses which were held here during the past winter and summer, I shall not attempt to emulate, by taking a subject from the vast field of Jewish scholarship, the revered man [Rabbi Nehemiah A. Nobel] whose splendid address launched our last winter's activities. Nor would you expect it of me, younger and unknown as I am. I intend only to give you an account of the task we have set ourselves and the goals we have in mind, and I shall try to formulate these in the simplest of words.

Learning—there are by now, I should say, very few among you unable to catch the odd note the word sounds, even today, when it is used in a Jewish context. It is to a book, the Book, that we owe our survival—that Book which we use, not by accident, in the very form in which it has existed for millennia: it is the only book of antiquity that is still in living use as a scroll.* The learning

* The Torah scrolls read in synagogues are written in longhand on parchment.

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of this book became an affair of the people, filling the bounds of Jewish life completely. Everything was really within this learning of the Book. There have been "outside books,"* but studying them was looked upon as the first step toward heresy. Occasionally such "outside" elements—Aristotle, for example—have been successfully naturalized. But in the past few centuries the strength to do this would seem to have petered out.

Then came the Emancipation. At one blow it vastly enlarged the intellectual horizons of thought and soon, very soon afterwards, of actual living. Jewish "study" or "learning" has not been able to keep pace with this rapid extension. What is new is not so much the collapse of the outer barriers; even previously, while the ghetto had certainly sheltered the Jew, it had not shut him off. He moved beyond its bounds, and what the ghetto gave him was only peace, home, a home for his spirit. What is new, is not that the Jew's feet could now take him farther than ever before—in the Middle Ages the Jew was not an especially sedentary, but rather a comparatively mobile element of medieval society. The new feature is that the wanderer no longer returns at dusk. The gates of the ghetto no longer close behind him, allowing him to spend the night in solitary learning. To abandon the figure of speech—he finds his spiritual and intellectual home outside the Jewish world.

THE old style of learning is helpless before this spiritual emigration. In vain have Orthodoxy and Liberalism tried to expand into and fill the new domains. No matter how much the Jewish Law was stretched, it lacked the power to encompass and assimilate the life of the intellect and the spirit. The *mezuzah* may have still greeted one at the door, but the bookcase had, at best, a single Jewish corner. And Liberalism fared no better, even though it availed itself of the nimble air squadron of ideas rather than trying to master life by engaging it in hand-to-hand combat with the Law. There was nothing to be done apparently, except dilute the spirit of Judaism (or what passed for it) as much as possible in order to stake off the whole area of intellectual life; to fill it in the true sense was out of the question. High-sounding words were always on tap, words that the Judaism of old had had, but which it was chary of uttering for fear of dulling their edges with too frequent use. High-sounding words, like "humanity," "idealism," and so forth, which those who mouthed them thought of as encompassing the whole world. But the world resists such superficial embraces. It is impossible to assimilate to Judaism a field of intellectual and spiritual life through constantly reiterating a catchword and then claiming it to have kinship with some Jewish concept or other. The problems of democracy, for instance, cannot be Judaized merely by referring to the sentence in the Torah: "One law and one ordinance shall be both for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" (Num. 15:16), nor those of socialism by citing certain social institutions or social programs in ancient Israel. If we insist on trying, so much the worse for us! For the great, the creative spirits in our midst, have never allowed themselves to be deceived. They have left us. They went everywhere, they found their own spiritual homes, and they created spiritual homes for others. The Book around which we once gathered stands forlorn in this world, and even for those who regard it as a beloved duty to return to it at regular intervals, such a return is nothing but a turning away from life, a turning one's back on life. Their world remains un-Jewish even when they still have a Jewish world to return to. "Learning"—the old form of maintaining the relationship between life and the Book—has failed.

HAS it really? No, only in the old form. For down at heel as we are, we should not be a sign and a wonder among the peoples, we should not be the eternal people, if our very illness did not beget its own cure. It is now as it has always been. We draw new strength from the very circumstance that seemed to deal the death blow to "learning," from the desertion of our scholars to the realms of the alien knowledge of the "outside books," from the transformation of our erstwhile *talmide hachmim*† into the instructors and professors of modern European universities. A new "learning" is about to be born—rather, it has been born.

It is a learning in reverse order. A learn-

* Apocrypha, "books outside the Biblical cannon." Here applied to all "foreign" literature.

† "Disciples of the wise"; religious scholars.

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ing that no longer starts from the Torah and leads into life, but the other way round: from life, from a world that knows nothing of the Law, or pretends to know nothing, back to the Torah. That is the sign of the time.

It is the sign of the time because it is the mark of the men of the time. There is no one today who is not alienated, or who does not contain within himself some small fraction of alienation. All of us to whom Judaism, to whom being a Jew, has again become the pivot of our lives—and I know that in saying this here I am not speaking for myself alone—we all know that in being Jews we must not give up anything, not renounce anything, but lead everything back to Judaism. From the periphery back to the center; from the outside, in.

This is a new sort of learning. A learning for which—in these days—he is the most apt who brings with him the maximum of what is alien. That is to say, *not* the man specializing in Jewish matters; or, if he happens to be such a specialist, he will succeed, not in the capacity of a specialist, but only as one who, too, is alienated, as one who is groping his way home.

It is not a matter of pointing out relations between what is Jewish and what is non-Jewish. There has been enough of that. It is not a matter of apologetics, but rather of finding the way back into the heart of our life. And of being confident that this heart is a Jewish heart. For we are Jews.

That sounds very simple. And so it is. It is really enough to gather together people of all sorts as teachers and students. Just glance at our prospectus. You will find, listed among others, a chemist, a physician, a historian, an artist, a politician. Two-thirds of the teachers are persons who, twenty or thirty years ago, in the only century when Jewish learning had become the monopoly of specialists, would have been denied the right of teaching in a Jewish House of Study. They have come together here as Jews. They have come together in order to "learn"—for Jewish "learning" includes Jewish "teaching." Whoever teaches here—and I believe I may say this in the name of all who are teaching here—knows that in teaching here he need sacrifice nothing of what he is. Whoever gathers—and all of us are "gatherers"—must seize upon that which is to be gathered wherever he finds it. And more than this: he must seize upon himself as well, wherever he may find himself. Were we to do otherwise, we should continue in the errors of a century and perpetuate the failure of that century: the most we could do would be to adorn life with a few "pearls of thought" from the Talmud or some other source, and —for the rest—leave it just as un-Jewish as we found it. But no: we take life as we find it. Our own life and the life of our students; and gradually (or, at times, suddenly) we carry this life from the periphery where we found it to the center. And we ourselves are carried only by a faith which certainly cannot be proved, the faith that this center can be nothing but a Jewish center.

This faith must remain without proof. It carries further than our word. For we hail from the periphery. The oneness of the center is not something that we possess clearly and unambiguously, not something we can be articulate about. Our fathers were better off in that respect. We are not so well off today. We must search for this oneness and have faith that we shall find it. Seen from the periphery, the center does not appear invariably the same. In fact, the center of the circle looks different from each point of the periphery. There are many ways that lead from the outside in. Nevertheless, the inside is oneness and harmony. In the final analysis, everyone here should be speaking about the same thing. And he who speaks as he should, will in the end really have spoken about exactly what everyone else has spoken about. Only the outset, only the point of departure, will be different for everyone.

So, and only so, will you be able to understand the divisions and contrasts in our prospectus.* The contrasts are put in solely for the purpose of being bridged. Today what is classical, historical, and modern in Judaism may be placed side by side, but this ought not to be so and in the future will not be so. It is up to us to discover the root-fibers of history in the classical phase, and its harvest in the modern. Whatever is genuinely Jewish must be all three simultaneously. Such has been the case in Judaism in all its productive periods. And we shall leave it to those who stand on the out-

* The courses were divided into three parts: classical, historical, and modern Judaism.

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side to consider contrasts such as that between the Torah and the Prophets, between Halachah* and Haggadah,† between world and man, as real contrasts which cannot be reconciled. So far as we are concerned, which one of us is not certain that there could be no Torah without the prophetic powers of Moses, father of all prophets before him and after him? And—on the other hand—that there could be no prophets without the foundation of a Law and an order from which their prophecy derived its rule and measure? As for any contrast between Halachah* and Haggadah,† between world Talmud shows the student that the two are inseparably intertwined, and every page of Jewish history confirms that the same minds and hearts are preoccupied with both: scholarly inquiry *and* meditation, legal decision *and* scriptural exegesis. And, finally, the Jewish world! Who could imagine that it would be possible to build it up without man, Jewish man! And what—in the long run—will become of Jewish man if, no matter where he lives, he is not surrounded by an atmosphere Jewish to some degree, by a Jewish world?

So, all of this hangs together. More than that: it is one and the same within itself, and as such it will be presented to you here. You should regard every individual aspect, every individual lecture or seminar you attend, as a part of the whole, which is offered to you only for the sake of the whole.

It is in this sense that now, at the opening of the new term in this hall, I bid you welcome. May the hours you spend here become hours of remembrance, but not in the stale sense of a dead piety that is so frequently the attitude toward Jewish matters. I mean hours of another kind of remembrance, an inner remembering, a turning from externals to that which is within, a turning that, believe me, will and must become for you a returning home. Turn into yourself, return home to your innermost self and to your innermost life.

* Halachah refers to sections in the Talmud and rabbinic literature dealing with Law.

† Haggadah (or Agada) refers to extra-legal, homiletical, ethical, religious, poetic, free interpretation of Scripture; and to legend.

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ON THE HORIZON

WHEN DO YOU CALL IT TREASON?

Two Soldiers: Rommel and "Happy"

NATHAN GLICK

BEFORE the French Revolution, wars were usually conducted by professional armies whose interests were those of any working group: high wages, low hours, and job security. The mercenary soldier fought for his pay check and if he went over to the enemy, his motive was, doubtless, better pay—or more loot. Ours, however, is an age of the citizen army and ideological war, and treason in wartime has taken on more profound connotations. It reveals a man's feeling toward his origins; it involves his political ideology and his code of ethics. Two current films—*The Desert Fox* and *Decision Before Dawn*—take up the question of treason and ideology in the last war and, by their juxtaposition of a British and an American viewpoint, illuminate some of the subject's dark corners. Produced by an American studio and directed by Hollywood's Henry Hathaway, *The Desert Fox* is British in every other respect: literary source, cast, outlook, and manner. *Decision Before Dawn* combines an American elasticity of mind and feeling with a less frequently encountered sensibility and warmth.

The Desert Fox opens, without credits, on a sequence of movement so cleanly executed and so lightning-quick that, while the eye follows it in a kind of hypnotized trance, the mind stands still. The purpose of this scene, a British commando night raid on the German army's African desert staff headquarters, is to endow the Rommel legend with a maximum of cinematic vividness. When the raid is over and the commandos, hooded like interplanetary creatures of science fiction, are gone, one of their wounded asks a German soldier: "Did we get him?" The prologue closes on the reply: "Are you serious, Englishman!"

Then, with a burst of drums and trumpets, the customary credits appear on the screen, and anticlimax sets in. The script writer, working from Brigadier Desmond Young's recent best-selling book of the same title, makes a brave try at preserving the Bulldog Drummond image of Rommel. The sound track gives us Auchinleck's instructions to British officers to deflate the idea widespread among their soldiers that the enemy commander is a superman. And Desmond Young appears as himself, a prisoner of war behind the German lines who is saved, through the Field Marshal's adherence to military punctilio, from having to execute an unsportsman-like German command. But when we finally reach Rommel himself, we see James Mason character-acting with the "business" of a chronic sniffle and a perplexed brow, in the stale tradition of Paul Muni's Zola.

The Rommel who broods through most of

IN TWO current movies, *The Desert Fox* and *Decision Before Dawn*, the leading figures are all military men, involved in very different ways with something called "treason." These movies, here analyzed by NATHAN GLICK, reflect the peculiar problems raised for the military mind by politics and war in our age, as well as the contrasting approaches of Germans, Britons, and Americans to the dilemmas involved in working for the enemy against one's own government. Mr. Glick writes frequently on the movies for this and other magazines. His article "'The Last Illusion' and 'Teresa'" appeared in this department last July.

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the film curiously contradicts every expectation raised by the prologue and early scenes. Instead of a history-making figure of daring and military intuition, we are shown a stodgy, intellectually quiescent family man. It is true that the film picks up Rommel's career at the turning point in Germany's military fortunes and concentrates on his place in a political sphere which was admittedly alien to him. But this hardly seems an adequate explanation for the failure to maintain a heroic myth throughout the length of the film. The portrait that emerges is the result, partly, of the movie-makers' timorous awe in the face of a hallowed military reputation and partly of the real Rommel's intractability, even after death, to their lionizing tendencies. Paradoxically, the weaknesses of the film have produced a characterization of Rommel, and through him of a certain type of German officer, which is more persuasive and probably more truthful than was intended.

THE military mind is typically conservative and military life does not conduce to eccentricity. It is thus almost proper to approach a military personality soberly, standing (as it were) at attention. The military ideology, furthermore, is among the few formidable supranational ideologies of modern times. A natural occupational basis for the affinity among military men of warring countries inheres in their isolation from the rest of the community. They develop a practical, emotional, and ultimately an ethical stake in the code they live by, so that there rises a realm of military morality which is distinct both from the democratic ethos and the totalitarian. From the democratic viewpoint, military life inflicts too many indignities on its soldiers; its code is too rigidly cruel. The totalitarian ruler, on the other hand, finds the military code too protective of its members, potentially too independent a locus of power: thus the development of the preventive purge. In *The Desert Fox,* the problem is raised, but not faced directly, as to why Rommel and the others involved in the July 1944 assassination plot against Hitler were not previously purged. The answer given, unintentionally, by the film is that these men had shown themselves so politically apathetic in every previous implementation of Nazi policy that they were deemed reliable. And in almost every sense they were. What finally broke these men from the regime was not its bestiality, not even its military setbacks, but the combination of military defeat *and* the violation of proper respect for established military authority. The generals were humiliated by having to take orders from the upstart "Austrian corporal." But they would have endured even this if only the corporal had won.

The Desert Fox has been attacked as a craven and dangerous attempt to rehabilitate the German generals. Actually, its total effect is deflationary rather than the opposite: the generals here are not only personally dull and politically retarded, but militarily unimpressive. If Rommel was a tactical genius, this movie gives no evidence of it. The aspect of the film which has led to the accusation of "whitewash" is its reflection of the workings of that peculiar machine—the military mind—particularly the British military mind. The tone of the tribute to Rommel is set in Desmond Young's opening remark about the Field Marshal's "scrupulous regard for the rules of warfare," and climaxed by Churchill's curious statement at the end that Rommel "deserves our respect because, *although a loyal German soldier* [my italics], he turned against the fanatic [Hitler]." Churchill, being a political as well as a military leader, insists on having it both ways: the military virtue of loyalty and the political virtue of conspiracy-at-the-proper-time.

BEHIND the tributes of Young and Churchill lies a peculiarly British approach to warfare. William James spoke of sport as providing a moral equivalent of war; for the British officer, war is the moral equivalent of sport. *The Wooden Horse,* an understated but highly exciting British film about the escape of two British officer prisoners of war from a German camp, regards the enterprise as a game played under stringent rules. The German treatment of the British officer prisoners is unusually liberal—a modified "honor system" prevails—and on neither side is political ideology broached. The simile of sportsmanship is carried out by the use of a gymnasium "horse" to cover up the underground burrowing preliminary to the escape attempt, and by the "teamwork" which is the keynote of the escape organization.

It is not considered fitting for the military person to ask political or personal questions,

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and that is why, in *The Desert Fox,* Rommel remains an unexplored quantity outside his military role. Churchill had tentatively and delicately raised the question of treason, but at the very end of the film, when there was no time left to pursue it. Treason is not a subject the English can approach with detachment. The long political tradition, the geographical insularity and ethnic homogeneity of England have given a special connotation to the idea of national loyalty. Rebecca West, an Englishwoman of great intelligence and cosmopolitan interests, stands as a case in point. In her book *The Meaning of Treason,* while she does not absolutely exclude the possibility of a justifiable preference for the ideals of an enemy country, she nevertheless regards this with a purely instinctive disgust. "A hearth gives warmth," and to forget this, she implies, constitutes a form of personal, physical, and ethical perversion.

THE argument of hearth and home, however loudly sounded on patriotic occasions, does not carry the same inevitability for Americans as it does for the English. The United States is a nation of "voluntary" citizens most of whose families have lived here less than a century. For them the memory of exodus is as much a part of their heritage as the cumulation of village gossip is for the British. Americans are constantly faced with the possibility of having to fight against their former fatherlands or their families' countries of origin.

Within a tight, visually fascinating melodrama of espionage, *Decision Before Dawn* raises the ethical problem of treason more earnestly and with far more complexity than *The Desert Fox.* A German medic corporal —twenty, highly sensitive—is taken prisoner by the Americans in France, and volunteers to return to Germany as an American spy. The film convinces us that this is not a case of wartime opportunism. The youth believes that his humanitarian ideals will be furthered by a German defeat. Yet the Americans are unsure about how to feel toward this young enemy soldier, converted not by American propaganda but by his own experience.

The colonel in charge of the Intelligence outfit takes the classic military view: traitors are useful as spies for one's own side, but they are never defensible. A traitor is a traitor no matter what his motives. The military man regards ideological defection with the same suspicion General Patton displayed toward psychoneurosis: it has no place in the science of warfare.

"A Kraut is a Kraut," on the other hand, tossed off unthinkingly by a good-natured GI, represents a thoroughgoing refusal to think about the matter at all. The enlisted man not only accepts but oversimplifies the propaganda of his own side; war is not a matter of honor or of tactics but simply of nationality, which for him includes ideology.

The moral burden of the film falls on the lieutenant, played by Richard Basehart who, along with William Holden, has become Hollywood's representation of the tough but moody and vulnerable all-American type. He starts out with a generalized skepticism—preferring the boastfully opportunist German to the idealist—and only after personal involvement begins tentatively to refine his views. The process is left incomplete, however. The death of the German youth serves as the basis for the film's tribute to his idealism and physical heroism at the same time that it means a kind of tribal punishment for his being both a German and a traitor.

THE complexity of the American soldier's judgment of the boy is more than matched by the subtlety with which the film independently observes him. There has been some criticism that the German boy's portrayal is inadequate in terms of his family, education, and opinions. It seems to me precisely the virtue of the characterization of "Happy" (so nicknamed for his pensive face and large sad eyes) that it is presented in behavioristic terms only, since he is basically an individual without ideology, whose responses are instinctive and open.

The youth's physical movements as he advances in stages from Frankfort to Mannheim have a somnambulistic quality, as if his situation was impossible to bear with senses fully alert. In his new role, the young German is spiritually a stranger walking past the familiar public landmarks of his childhood—the railroad terminals, bridges, monuments and streets, a museum and an opera house (both bombed out). No other film about Germany that I have seen captures the mixture of nostalgia and horror which any sensitive German must have felt returning from the front

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to the ruined cities. (In *The Wooden Horse* there is a contrasting impersonal view of similar public places in a German seaport, but the camera's pragmatic scrutiny in that film is appropriate to the experience of two escaping foreigners.) More impressive even than his use of the physical background are director Anatol Litvak's heightened though apparently casual documentary-style shots of the neat, dogged, submissive German civilians lined up at mushrooming check points.

"Happy's" trancelike passivity in the face of his disintegrating homeland coincides with his catalytic role. Like Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot,* he serves to precipitate other people's moral decisions. In his presence, the German prostitute makes a compassionate gesture of retribution, the SS general tries stiffly to be affable and frank, the French girl falls in love despite her theoretical hatred of all "Boches," and the American lieutenant reexamines the ethics of treason. But the moral force he exerts on others does not solve his own dilemma, namely, that whatever the action he takes, it will have tragic consequences.

"Happy's" decision in each incident can only be based on the pressures of conflicting demands on his humanity at any particular moment. He is faced with the fact that the information he is giving the Americans will endanger his father, a doctor in a hospital alongside a crucial chemical plant. This he can endure; yet, in one of the most convincing and moving touches of the film, he will not himself kill, by an overdose of adrenalin, a cardiac German general, even though the latter's survival will mean the death of a private who went AWOL to be with his family during a bombing raid, as well as many more deaths less immediately tangible. He can endanger his father because the act by which he does so is not directly related to the outcome, and the outcome, though likely, is not inevitable. The information must first get to American headquarters; it must be deemed sufficiently important for action; planes must be sent out, and bombs dropped. Somewhere along the line, something may happen to avert the catastrophe. But when it comes to murdering the von Stroheim type general (who plays *"Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"* on the phonograph after condemning the deserter to death), the human object is too close. The dominating impulse of the youth is not heroism and righteousness, but a hatred of violence and of directly cruel action.

It is perhaps the sign of a trend that Oskar Werner's pale spiritual face in this role is of a type that we last saw in the pacifist movies of the early 30's: Lew Ayres in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Phillips Holmes in *The Man I Killed.* The use of so sympathetic a character would seem to signify also an American recognition of the need to discriminate among Germans. At least three basic types are presented and the implication is left that the fate of Germany depends on their varying political weight and our ability to find a suitable approach to each of them.

The portrait of "Tiger," the neither-good-nor-bad German, is in some ways the most interesting and socially substantial. Once an animal trainer in a circus, he knows that all slogans are frauds and ruses, and is himself taken in by none, the Allied as little as the Nazi. He represents a development which Rebecca West failed to envisage in her theory that the disposition to treason in modern times rises from urban rootlessness and disembodied intellectuality. "Tiger's" native heath is neither a country nor an idea, but simply himself. He represents the nonfanatic who responds only in terms of pure, immediate self-interest. His opposite number is the "true believer" which the film presents in two standard variations: the short, greasy, sensual motorcycle courier and the intense, "spiritual," bespectacled Gestapo agent.

The third type is the man of good will, like "Happy," cornered in an almost impossible situation, conflicting loyalties stretched like barbed wire over his sensibilities, whose ideals can be both decent and real. It is one of the distinctions of *Decision Before Dawn* that it reminds us that this type, on which the hope for a decent rehabilitated Germany depends, still exists.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

WHY JEWS STAY SOBER

Social Scientists Examine Jewish Abstemiousness

NATHAN GLAZER

A Lithuanian Jew had given himself up to drink; he spent his days in the local inn swallowing brandy while his wife and children starved. One day, his wife came to the inn determined to drag him out and force him to become an honest provider. He wheedled her into sitting down, and had a glass of brandy set before her, too. She tasted it cautiously, then spat it out, crying, "Pfui! What vile stuff!" "Well, what do you think?" said the husband. "You think I sit here lapping honey?"

A Yid a shikker, zoll er geharget ver'n [A Jew who's a drunkard—hanging's too good for him!].

IN ONE respect, at least, the American Jews are not very different from the Israeli Jews who contemptuously dismiss them as assimilated *goyim*: neither have much use for hard liquor. And therein is wrapped one of the most persistent mysteries of a mysterious people.

The historic soberness of the Jews would not be so mysterious if Jews, like Mohammedans, simply had no use for drink in general. But as a matter of fact, the Jews have been fairly respectable drinkers since Noah's discovery of the vine (Gen. 9:20). Of course, they had a special prayer required before drinking wine; but this did not mean they had any notion of religious restraint in drinking it, aside from the general rabbinic emphasis on moderation. There are a good number of lushes scattered through the pages of the Bible. Ben Sirah, the great Jewish moralist of the 3rd century B.C.E., took his drinking seriously, and one of his maxims, addressed to the wise man, reads, "In a place for wine, pour not forth talk." The rabbis of the Talmudic period were against drunkenness but they were properly appreciative of the effects of wine: one rabbi, who gave a dinner to his pupils and found them shy and hesitant to begin discussion, ordered his servant: "Give wine to the young men that they may break their silence." And in Spain, Jewish scholars seem to have been as thirsty as their Christian fellows across the Pyrenees (see translations of some of their songs by Allen Mandelbaum, in COMMENTARY, "The Cedars of Lebanon," February 1951).

BUT then something happened, and it's hard to say whether it was that the Jews began drinking less, or the rest of the world began drinking more. Possibly it was only that the rest of the world began drinking more; in any case, the Jews fell rapidly behind, and Jewish sobriety was for the first time added to the catalogue of traits that annoyed the Gentiles.

In the Middle Ages, the process of distillation, known in Scotland and Ireland from earliest times, spread through Europe, and Western

A PROVERBIAL "character trait" of the Jews for at least the last few hundred years has been their moderation in the use of alcohol. This phenomenon has always provoked puzzlement and curiosity—and much speculation, oral and written. Of late, modern social science, in its critical examination of traditional beliefs and notions, has turned its attention to this matter, too, and Jewish sobriety has been the subject of empirical research and scientific analysis. NATHAN GLAZER, associate editor of COMMENTARY, here summarizes the known facts and weighs the diverse theories offered in explanation of them.

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man, who up to then had had to be satisfied with naturally fermented wine (with a top alcoholic content of about 16 per cent) and beer (which may sometimes get as strong), was now able to drink pure alcohol, if he dared. Fortified wines—port and sherry—and brandy and whiskey entered history, and it seems we have not recovered yet. It became easier and cheaper to get drunk than ever before in history. When we consider that the Homeric heroes could become roaring drunk on wine, and the Germans on beer, we must conclude they had heroic capacities indeed—for classical antiquity knew nothing about distilling alcohol to fortify wine or make spirits. Instead, the ancients added spices, resin, pitch, lime, sea water, salt, and all sorts of unlikely ingredients to their wines—whether to improve or cover up the taste of wine in an unperfected state, or to stretch it, or for medicinal reasons, or to increase its potency, or for all of these and other reasons, is still a matter for dispute among classical scholars. These achievements of classical antiquity in the field of alcoholic beverages are lost to us but it would not seem we are missing much. The Middle Ages and modern times gave birth to most of the varieties of wines and liquors we drink today.

About the time that distillation was introduced with explosive effects into Western Europe, the Jews fell behind. They continued to drink wine, and they enjoyed the new hard liquors—but with a moderation foreign to the other nations of Europe. One country after another went off on a tremendous spree—Germany in the 16th century and England in the 18th century seemed to contemporary observers on the verge of floating off on a sea of alcohol. The diseases produced by excess of alcohol were first discovered and described in these centuries; as for the Jewish contribution to medical pathology, it was not cirrhosis of the liver or Korsakoff's syndrome but diabetes. While the Catholic Church encouraged four cups of wine as a maximum, the Jews—at least at the Seder meal of the Passover holiday—demanded four cups as a minimum (and at one time, it was required that a mourner drink ten); but despite the absence of theological injunction and regulation, Jews managed to resist the temptations of distilled liquor.

In the East European Pale, temperance, along with chastity, was one of the virtues that was taken for granted. The strangest part of all this was that the Jews were not only habituated to the drinking of wine from earliest childhood by their religion but also spent their adult lives producing and selling spirits. The liquor trade in Eastern Europe was a Jewish monopoly: it had originally been granted to the landowners by the Polish monarchy in the 15th century, and Jews, as agents of the nobility, became the producers and sellers of hard liquor. When Russia fell heir to the mass of Polish Jewry at the beginning of the 19th century, that trade was the chief source of livelihood of the village Jews. All through the 19th century czarist bureaucrats urged the elimination of the Jews from the liquor traffic, and at various times in various places Jews were driven from the trade. Finally, in 1892, liquor became a government monopoly, and 200,000 Jews lost their livelihood. (The story is scattered through Dubnow's *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland.*)

Again, the monotonous conclusion: while the miserable peasant escaped into alcohol, and drunkenness became one of the great problems of 19th-century Russia, the equally miserable Jewish artisan and *luftmensh,* it seemed, never gave it a thought.

But after all, no virtues in the East European Jews are very surprising to contemporary minds. They still lived under a moral code more rigorous and more detailed than anything known of elsewhere; and while the code had nothing to say about temperance, presumably the habits of control built up by the observance of the 613 precepts carried over into the realm of alcohol.

This is an easy and perfectly satisfactory explanation—up to the end of the 19th century. By then, great communities of Jews were growing up in Western Europe and overseas, with less and less attachment to the traditional Law. The Jews shaved their beards, abandoned their traditional dress, began to eat pork and mix meat and milk, deserted the synagogue—presumably their temperance should have gone along with the rest. After all, do Jews have fewer troubles to drown than other people?

But even in America, where it was customary for the unhappy immigrants to drink more and with worse effects than at home, and where Jews were probably less controlled by their traditional laws and observances than anywhere else in history, the ancient pattern held up. No matter what kind of ill effect from excessive indulgence we consider—alcoholic psychoses, alcoholism without psychosis, arrest for drunkenness, broken homes or marital unhappiness

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because of drink—we will not find many Jews affected.

For example: In 1929-31, Benjamin Maltzberg studied admissions to New York state hospitals for alcoholic psychoses, and calculated that the rate of first admissions for various foreign-born groups (per 100,000 in the population) was as follows: for the Irish, 25.6; Scandinavians, 7.8; Italians, 4.8; English, 4.3; Germans, 3.8; Jews, 0.5.

In 1951, Robert Straus published a study of the religion of persons coming to clinics for treatment for alcoholism in eight cities; 1.6 per cent were Jews, though they formed about 7.5 per cent of the population of these cities.

In 1941, a study was made of arrests for drunkenness in San Francisco; the rate for persons of Irish descent was calculated at no less than 7,876 per 100,000 in the population; for Jews, 27 per 100,000 in the population.

Admissions to a veterans' hospital in Northport, Long Island, were studied for 1936-39; of 111 first- and second-generation Jewish admissions, one was alcoholic; of 113 first- and second-generation Italian admissions, 5 were alcoholic; of 222 first- and second-generation Irish admissions, 36 were alcoholic; of 302 undifferentiated third-generation whites, 40 were alcoholic.

The figures could be repeated ad infinitum. They give a fuller picture for foreign-born Jews than for the native-born; but from whatever evidence we have, it would appear that second- and third-generation American Jews have, by and large, not kicked over the traces. Besides these figures, there is the testimony of doctors, judges, social workers, and welfare departments, all of whom agree that Jewish cases do not, in any large measure, suffer from alcohol.

PRESUMABLY, alcohol strips off the outer layers of the personality laid on by convention and conscience, and reveals the true man underneath—or, if we follow the Elizabethan Thomas Nash, who divided drunkards into those who get ape-drunk, pig-drunk, sheep-drunk, and so on, the true animal underneath. In any case, the same should hold for nations, and their patterns of drunkenness should reveal something about their inner and buried life. The question is, what?

It has been suggested that when Protestantism forced each man to face his God alone without the intermediary of priest and community, the strain was too great, and we had the great binges that followed the Reformation in Protestant countries; perhaps. Except that on that basis we can't explain the intemperance of Catholic Ireland and Poland. And then, too, the Jews have theoretically been in this religious position since their priesthood lost its functions. Many people believe that in northern climates men drink distilled liquor, in southern wine, and this explains the national differences. This holds well enough for Europe; but Central America and Mexico and the Caribbean combine tropic climates with a passion for strong distilled liquor. Another explanation is that in those countries where sexual repression is severe alcoholism serves as an outlet. That helps explain Ireland but then what about Sweden, the freest country in Europe sexually, which also has one of the highest rates of alcoholism? And what too about the Jews, with their stringent code of sexual behavior? One extensive study of addiction to alcohol among primitive peoples proves decisively that it is closely correlated with anxiety over the means of subsistence, and the most secure peoples drink the least. Except that America, one of the most favored of countries, has one of the most serious problems of alcoholic excess. Then too, Sweden is said to be, materially speaking, one of the pleasantest countries of Europe.

There is no question that a people's relation to alcohol represents something very deep about it; so deep, however, that it is not easy to find a very good explanation of just what it is.

AMERICANS, however, as Tocqueville wrote, "entertain . . . a very lofty and often exaggerated opinion of human understanding." At Yale University an institute exists for the sole purpose of studying alcohol and its varied effects, and a journal is published, the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol,* which is already in its twelfth volume, and contains in its approximately 8,000 pages a vast number of studies on all aspects of alcohol—all the statistics, and a good part of the other information in this article, are taken from it. The Yale institute is now engaged in a major effort to crack the problem of Jewish temperance, under a grant from I. Rogosin. At the same time, the somewhat less extreme resistance of the Italians to alcoholic excess and disorder—in its own way, however, as startling as that of the Jews, because they drink much more on the average than Jews do—is being attacked by another research team.

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In the September 1951 issue of the *Journal*, Charles R. Snyder and Ruth H. Landman present a "Prospectus for Sociological Research on Jewish Drinking Patterns," carefully culling the literature for explanations of the alcoholic aspect of the Jewish mystery. Now an "explanation" is a complicated thing. And what is an explanation for one age and one person is not for another. At one time, about one hundred and fifty years ago, the greatest philosopher of the age addressed himself to our problem. Immanuel Kant observed that the Jews were a temperate people; he observed too that ministers and women also stayed sober. And he wrote in his *Anthropologie*:

"Women, ministers, and Jews do not get drunk, as a rule, at least they carefully avoid all appearance of it, because their civic position is weak and they need to be reserved. Their outward worth is based merely on the belief of others in their chastity, piousness, and separatistic lore. All separatists, that is those who subject themselves not only to the general law of the country but also to a special sectarian law, are exposed through their eccentricity and alleged chosenness to the attention and criticism of the community and thus cannot relax in their self-control, for intoxication, which deprives one of cautiousness, would be a scandal for them." *

Initially, this explanation suggests, Jews remained sober, at any rate in the presence of non-Jews, for reasons of self-preservation; and as a matter of fact, Jews of Eastern Europe often got high on appropriate occasions—but it was unthinkable for a Jew to get drunk with non-Jews. But American social scientists are very cool to the idea that man's reason can play any great role in the way social groups act, and neither to Mr. Snyder and Miss Landman, nor to Robert F. Bales and Donald D. Glad (the last two have written doctoral theses on the problem of Jewish temperance), does Kant's explanation seem very plausible.

MR. SNYDER and Miss Landman look with greater favor on another theory, stemming from the work of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who constantly emphasized that the motives of specific individuals, whether rational or irrational, could not very well explain differences between groups—only the nature of the group itself could. Durkheim believed that modern society was suffering from a breakdown of the ties of religion and custom that bound together people in small rural and primitive communities. Suicide, he believed, was an excellent measure of the extent of the breakdown of the moral law among different groups. While men lived in communities closely regulated by custom, under the eyes of their neighbors, they did not commit suicide; when they moved to cities, freeing themselves in increasing measure from the ties that bound them to their fellow men, they tended to commit suicide in ever large numbers. The figures bore him out. According to Durkheim, furthermore, the Jews, to a greater extent than either Protestants or Catholics in the countries of 19th century Europe, still constituted a close moral community. And indeed, their suicide rates were much lower than those of the Catholics.

Not long after Durkheim presented his theory of suicide, L. Cheinisse suggested that Jewish resistance to alcoholic excess could be similarly explained; if Jews formed enough of a cohesive community to prevent people from falling into the despair that resulted in suicide, perhaps their community was also strong enough to keep them from the less drastic despair that found an outlet in alcohol.

In sum, then, this theory argues that despite the breakup of the ghetto and the abandonment of the traditional Law on the part of the majority of Jews, they still form, more than other peoples, a rather close community which is able to supply psychological and material support to its members, and saves them from alcoholism and suicide.*

THE Durkheim-Cheinisse hypothesis, however, is not by itself very satisfying. Why should a close, "organic" community not get drunk as often as any other? As a matter of fact they do, with the difference only that they all get drunk together on festive occasions. (Sometimes, as with the Moi of Indo-China, and the Indians of Chamula in Mexico, these festive occasions seem to be almost continual, and everyone is at least half drunk most of the

* This passage was translated by E. M. Jellinek, together with other passages dealing with drink, and published in the first volume of the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol.*

* Unfortunately for this theory, Jewish suicide rates began to leap upward at the beginning of the 20th century: indeed, the Jews of pre-Hitler Germany had some of the highest suicide rates ever recorded for any group. But at the same time, as we have seen, Jews did not show any greater propensity for drunkenness and its consequences.

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time.) But that is just the point. The organic community gets drunk all together, at regular fixed occasions, for specific purposes. Drinking is a ritual, and indeed in primitive communities and in all ancient societies drinking had a religious character. (The Moi actually killed an early French explorer who, by refusing to drink with them, threatened to bring down the vengeance of the gods.) It is this ritual element characteristic of the life of organic communities that prevents alcoholism from becoming perverted to individual uses and the solution of individual unhappiness.

That, according to Mr. Bales, to whom we have referred earlier, is the explanation of Jewish temperance. The Jews drink wine on fixed religious occasions: the Friday night *kiddush*, the four cups at the Seder meal, the annual Purim and Simchas Torah sprees, the cup drunk by bride and groom under the marriage canopy—wine even plays a role in the circumcision rite. Of course, Mr. Bales does not argue that Jews, like the Moi, drink only on religious occasions: but these occasions color their attitude to drinking, and prevent them from taking what he calls a "utilitarian" attitude toward alcohol—drinking it quite consciously for psychological effects.

One wonders if this "ritual" interpretation of Jewish drinking will hold even for the Orthodox; one thinks of the Hasidim who got drunk on wine and God together (their enemies, naturally, did not think God had anything to do with it), and there is the Talmudic sage referred to at the beginning of the article who knew quite well that wine loosens tongues and was quite willing to use it for this "utilitarian" purpose.

If Mr. Bales, however, is right, it follows that we would not expect the American Jews, who have already wandered far indeed from the paths of their ancestors, and are more likely to begin their festive meals with martinis than with the benediction pronounced over wine, to keep out of the alcoholic wards much longer. And Mr. Bales, firmly stepping out on a limb, predicts just this. Perhaps he is right. The great majority of American Jews today, however, are still immigrants and the sons of immigrants. (One study in a representative city showed only 10 per cent of the Jewish population was third generation.) We are all closer to the ghetto than we think; and, even if we drink martinis, most of us were raised in homes where the benediction was pronounced. Perhaps when we are third and fourth generation rather than first and second, we shall not be very different from other Americans in the way we take, and respond to, our liquor.

But perhaps, too, the sociologists have been too hasty in disposing of Kant's explanation. The Jews have been under siege for a long time, and have had to move cautiously for the last thousand years at least. It is revealing to me that when they had no need to move cautiously they minded the number of their cups less: in ancient Palestine, in the days of the First Commonwealth, when the prophets denounced them for leaving the simple ways of the desert; in the days of the Second Commonwealth, when the disputations of Jewish scholars seemed suspiciously close to the drinking sessions of Greek philosophers; in the early centuries of Jewish prosperity in Spain. Christian Europe seems first to have tightened the lips of the Jews; when we think of how our forefathers lived in medieval Europe, it is not hard to understand how it was that Jews began to feel that *they* had to have their wits about them, whatever the Gentiles did. Perhaps the siege has been raised here in America, but most Jews as yet are not, very deep down, sure that it has been.

Of course the siege is only the beginning of an explanation, not the whole explanation. Because of the siege, the traditional Jewish emphasis (traditional, that is, for the post-Biblical era) on reason, on logic, on consciousness, has been reinforced, as has the traditional distaste for violence and irrationality. It is revealing that even when Jews get drunk, they are not violent drunks, as, for example, Scandinavians are supposed to be—if alcohol permits the return of the inhibited, then we must conclude that irrational violence has been so deeply inhibited among the Jews that it does not rise to the surface even when alcohol dulls the higher centers of the brain.

It is not the consciousness of the siege that prevents any individual Jew from taking one more drink—motivation is more complicated than that. But it is the consequences of the siege, passed down from generation to generation, and including such elements as the desire to hold on to one's senses and a distaste for the irrational, that sets a limit to Jewish drinking. So that it is indeed true that the Jew does not restrain himself because he thinks of the surrounding non-Jewish world: he is as temperate

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in all-Jewish company, or in an all-Jewish state. Rather, his restraint has become automatic—by what mechanisms, we may perhaps learn from the Yale study now in progress—in the course of hundreds of years.

But this is only one effect of the Jewish consciousness of difference. Here in America, where the Jews are not another nation, as they were in Eastern Europe, they wish intensely to overcome the difference; and so the Jew may very often take a drink in non-Jewish company, or even in Jewish, just to show he is "one of the boys." But even here the hand of reason shows itself: the Jew drinks—or he does not drink—from "reasons of state." And the non-Jews are made as uncomfortable by the Jewish drinker as by the Jewish non-drinker. As Jake and his pals say, in effect, of Robert Cohn, the fighting and drinking Jew of *The Sun Also Rises*—he "drinks by the book."

Drinking, after all, strips us down to the natural man. And, for better or for worse, there does not seem to be much natural man left in the Jews to strip down to.*

* Interestingly enough, the Southern Negro, and to a lesser degree the Northern Negro, too, has not been a great drinker, and there are still not so many Negro as white alcoholics. Here, also, perhaps it was too dangerous to lose control.

In the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* for 1947 one may read an interview with a Jewish high school senior on the subject of alcohol conducted by Mr. Glad in the course of his studies. "I've never been drunk myself," the boy told Mr. Glad. "I should try it though —a fellow should know how it affects him. . . ." He understands well enough why other people drink: "They're trying to drown their sorrows, and it may give them a false happiness." What would you say is bad about excessive drinking, Mr. Glad asked. "It affects the mind—dulls the brain." What's good about drinking in moderation? the interviewer continued. "When you're at a party it makes you feel like you're one of the gang. If you don't, people feel you're not a regular fellow. . . . It's also a business help . . . it's kind of a social custom . . . you don't want people to get the impression that you're different."

Of course there is a lot here that many non-Jewish Americans might have said. And yet, centuries ago, the Jewish innkeeper very likely also thought, as he saw the pointless gaiety and pointless tears aroused by his liquor, "It affects the mind—dulls the brain." Had he come across these same words, Kant might have used them to illustrate his explanation of why the Jews stay sober.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Disraeli and Jewish Emancipation

To the Editor of Commentary:

Philip Rieff's article ("Disraeli: The Chosen of History" in the January issue) passes over one interesting aspect of the conflict between Disraeli's Jewish pride and his Christian-Tory principles. Disraeli was the leader of the House of Commons when, after a long struggle for Jewish emancipation, Parliament finally allowed Baron Lionel de Rothschild to take his oath of office without professing allegiance to Christianity (1858). Nonetheless, neither Disraeli nor his colleagues deserve any credit for the Jewish success. As late as May 1858, the Earl of Derby, Disraeli's superior in the "Derby-Disraeli" government, had been steadfastly opposing the Jewish claims, although, two months later, he had been brought to see the advantages of compromise with the Liberals. To be sure, Disraeli was always verbally in favor of the right of Jews to sit in Parliament. But he succeeded in finding one obstacle after another to delay the passage of the emancipation bills.

In his first parliamentary address on the subject (December, 1847), Disraeli began by agreeing with the most stalwart of the reactionaries that the "principle of religious truth" should carry more weight in government than the "principle of religious liberty." But, he continued, that was precisely the reason why Parliament should admit the Jews, who are, after all, the true authors of the Christian religion. The need to maintain the Christian character of the Parliament was, he believed, the best grounds for admitting Jews as members. Needless to say, such an argument won no converts from the Conservatives.

Possibly sensing the hostility which he was arousing, Disraeli ceased to interest himself actively in the Jewish problem. In 1850, Rothschild was attempting to test the validity of the laws requiring a Christian oath of all members of Parliament; on the strength of certain precedents, he entered the House of Commons and attempted to take the seat to which the votes of the London electors had entitled him since 1847. The Liberal majority of the House were sympathetic, but did not know how far the law permitted them to modify their oath without the consent of the upper house. Theoretically, they might have found a loophole which would have permitted Rothschild to take his seat, and might thus have avoided the usual frustration of passing an emancipation bill, only to have it vetoed by the Lords. Such a possibility was prevented, among others, by Disraeli. Notwithstanding his Jewish sympathies, he demanded that the debate be cut short in favor of the Irish Franchise Bill. Likewise in 1851, when David Salomons was trying the same strategy as Rothschild, Disraeli was aligned with those who objected to wasting any time on an issue which was considered to have been already resolved.

Disraeli showed less concern for the wasted time and opportunity of the Jewish candidates for Parliament, or of the electors who, time after time, had returned them, and were now unrepresented in the Commons. After all, he argued, the Jews did not fare so badly in England. ". . . there is no class of religionists in this country who have less cause to complain of the spirit of the community or the temper of the Legislature. When I remember what was the position of that class a very short period back—hardly, indeed, a quarter of a century ago —when I contrast that position of social degredation and political disability with the position which they now occupy and enjoy, I own that I am proud and gratified by the comparison." With such arguments did Disraeli salve his conscience and counsel patience. . . .

The dissatisfaction of the Jewish community with Disraeli's behavior is therefore hardly to be wondered at. Even the Philadelphia *Ledger* compared him with Josephus, who "followed in the adulterating train of Titus the day the sacred vessels were borne in triumph through Rome." The *Jewish Chronicle* was equally vindictive towards one whom they still half regarded as a renegade. . . .

But perhaps the *Illustrated London News* came closest to an understanding of Disraeli's motives. Describing the restrained atmosphere of the Commons when Rothschild appeared to subscribe, legally, at last, to the necessary oath, it comes finally to Mr. Disraeli. . . . Rothschild had satisfactorily taken the oath, and the Liberals had greeted him with mild applause. Now

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Disraeli was approaching to offer his congratulations. "The faint tinge of color that came over the pallid cheeks of Mr. Disraeli as he grasped the hand of the first Judaic member of Parliament, and the momentary gleam of his eye, indicated a sense of the triumph of race; and perhaps at that moment there may have been a deeper feeling still in his heart—one of regret that he was not leading the House of Commons without having been compelled to use those hitherto cabalistic words 'upon the true faith of a Christian.'" . . .

RABBI HILLEL A. FINE
Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

"Cairo to Damascus"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Comparing the review of John Roy Carlson's book *Cairo to Damascus,* presented in the January 1952 COMMENTARY by George Z. Goldberg, with reviews in the New York *Times* and New York *Herald Tribune,* it seems to me that your reviewer bends over backwards to show that the Arabs are not so crude as Carlson makes them out to be.

The book, furthermore, which is called "inconsequential" by Goldberg, seems to be quite timely and revealing, especially in view of the recent riots in Egypt which show the fanatical savagery of the Arab mobs. (The New York *Times* of January 9, 1952 gives the following account of one such recent riot where "a crowd of Egyptians was said to have butchered a young Moslem last Friday mistakenly thinking him a Copt. They dragged his body through the streets with a hookpin in his mouth occasionally stopping to set it alight with gasoline. They sacked a Coptic church, made a bonfire of its contents and tossed the body of the luckless Moslem on top of the pyre."

The writer of this letter does not harbor ill feelings against all Arabs. As a matter of fact he meets regularly with a Lebanese Arab residing in the community and is friendly with some Christian Syrian Arabs. He merely wishes to show that books such as Carlson's reveal the primitive level of a large number of the Arab masses who must receive Western aid and education in order to help themselves and to stabilize conditions in a vital area of the world—the Near East.

RABBI M. HERSCHEL LEVINE
Willimantic, Connecticut.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The fact that George Z. Goldberg is a pseudonym is peculiar. The reason could be his book review of *Cairo to Damascus* by John Roy Carlson. No respectable magazine prints articles under a pseudonym.

I challenge the fact that Mr. Carlson's book is "one-sided reporting." Your book reviewer is undoubtedly a pusillanimous American Jew suffering from the self-hatred and guilt complex. It is fashionable for the tissue-paper liberals to shout their pseudo-humanitarian tongues for the Palestine Arab refugees and blame the ferment in the Middle East on the support the Western European countries, especially England and the United States, gave to Israel. The economic conditions existed in the Middle East before Israel. Israel is willing to pay for resettlement of the Arab refugees, but the Arabs don't want to settle the problem. The Gentile world with the anti-Semitic Jews are using Israel as a scapegoat for the Middle East.

Mr. Carlson is not reporting about a "fringe." They are "lunatics." I will not dispute this fact. The King of Egypt, the Mufti of Jerusalem with Cominform help, Nahas Pasha, and the "Lion of Morocco," Abd el Krim, are the leaders of this group. They are also the fanatics. This is the group Mr. Carlson met. They are the ones calling the cards. The "Friends of the Middle East" are playing cards with the fellow-travelers when they support reactionary regimes that get their money from the Communists.

MELVIN NAHUM COHEN
Middle Atlantic Region
Intercollegiate Zionist Federation
of America
Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am not sure that Rabbi Levine and I differ very much. Neither of us seems to believe that all Arabs are bad and both of us think that mob violence is reprehensible and that the Arab masses are backward. Rabbi Levine says as much in his letter and I made the same points in my review. We differ, however, in our estimate of John Roy Carlson's *Cairo to Damascus,* which I called "inconsequential" and which Rabbi Levine says is "quite timely and revealing." As I wrote in the review, I too think the book is timely; but, for the reasons that I gave there and that need not be repeated here, I don't think Mr. Carlson accomplishes his aim to "bring both the Arabs and the Jews into truer focus." Readers of both the review and the book will be able to judge for themselves whether I am right. Incidentally, I wonder if Rabbi Levine sees any similarity between the tone of the last paragraph of his letter and the tone of the remarks usually concluded by, "Now, I'm really not prejudiced. You know, some of my best friends are. . . ."

Mr. Cohen's observations are somewhat con-

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fusing. It is difficult to tell at times whether he is criticizing me, or my review, or just giving vent to a lot of peeves whose relevance to the book and the review is not immediately apparent. Mr. Cohen is able to draw some far-reaching conclusions about personality and behavior from a single book review. These observations, as well as his comments about the responsibility for the plight of the Arab refugees, I shall ignore. Mr. Cohen raises one relevant point. He thinks Mr. Carlson is indeed reporting about "lunatics" but not about a "fringe." The fact is, he has not reported about the leaders, political as well as cultural and educational, in the Arab world, and he *has* reported about a fringe. On this point again, the reader will have to make up his own mind as to whether or not I have accurately described *Cairo to Damascus*. As for my use of a pseudonym, I wonder if Mr. Cohen knows that "John Roy Carlson" is a pseudonym and that Mr. Carlson, in gathering material for the book Mr. Cohen defends, used other names as well. He had his good reasons for using a pseudonym, and mine are similar ones. But the name on a piece of writing may be irrelevant; thus Mr. Cohen is far more extreme under his own name than I under a pseudonym.

Finally, Mr. Cohen seems to think that a Jew who sees the Arabs as anything but all bad and all wrong must be pusillanimous, self-hating, and driven by guilt feelings. I venture to predict that one day there will be peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors and an abatement of mutual recriminations. Then simple-minded folk like Mr. Cohen will find themselves high and dry with only their passion to embrace, for then even Israel will be taking a more balanced and realistic view of the Arabs.

GEORGE Z. GOLDBERG

New York City

The Study of Man

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Each issue of COMMENTARY contains at least two or three articles of considerable interest to students of the social sciences. An example from your December issue is Will Herberg's "When Social Scientists View Labor." Blind spots of economic theorists and of the "human relations" (a misleading label, incidentally) group are nicely brought out; the significance of real conflicts of interests, as distinct from faulty communications, is well put.

I wish, however, that the author of this generally excellent and incisive discussion had specified the "certain sociologists" who share the "fantasy" of "the union . . . possessing jurisdiction over the entire life of the worker. . . ."—they are strangers to me. I agree that more sociologists should study labor "from the inside." But a few, at least, are producing informed as well as theoretically sophisticated studies, ranging from C. W. Mills' *The New Men of Power* to the more modest and less controversial publications of Alvin Gouldner, Ely Chinoy, and others; perhaps their works should have been mentioned. This is a small matter, however. Congratulations to Mr. Herberg and to COMMENTARY for a first-rate piece.

CHARLES H. PAGE
Department of Sociology
Smith College
Northampton, Mass.

When the FBI Comes

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is not easy to see what purpose Mr. Gersh had in writing "The Day the FBI Came to Our House" (January 1952) beyond his patent pleasure in portraying his family life for a *Saturday Evening Post* cover.

He is very far from taking the position that one ought not to squeal on one's neighbors to the secret police. Indeed he assures us more than once that he would have told more if he had known more.

He makes the sound point that political investigators ought to be politically sophisticated, but he does not develop the idea. Indeed he weakens it by closing on that note of high holiness with which voters for Norman Thomas so often betray their own political naivety.

Bernard de Voto has asked the question: what should the citizen do when the FBI comes around, and he has given his clear answer. Citizen de Voto will not talk.

There is surely more to be said on the subject. Do we loyally support the FBI when it is investigating a ring of automobile thieves? Or a lynching? Is treason less reprehensible?

Is the center of the question, then, the FBI's secret methods? I believe it is. And I do not believe the citizen's only responsibility toward this question consists in behaving correctly when the FBI comes to him. I hope COMMENTARY will publish more serious analyses of the whole FBI problem.

WINIFRED SCOTT

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Harry Gersh's article "The Day the FBI Came to Our House" is a sincere account of what must have been a mutually embarrassing experience, it is less than fair to the FBI.

Surely one cannot blame FBI agents for finding out if one's wife will talk freely about a person suspected of subversive activities. Also,

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one cannot attack a responsible government security agency's representative for asking the lady directly if she knew of the suspect's alleged misdeeds. The character, personality, background, and attitudes of people presumed to be in a position to give information are relevant. Undoubtedly, the agents Mr. Gersh met were not experts on radical movements; there are many federal laws besides those on espionage and violent overthrow of the government which the FBI is responsible for enforcing.

Perhaps the man being investigated subsequently became involved in more "dangerous" activities than the Bronx Free Fellowship. Through personal observation of many cases coming before the United States Commissioner's court in the Eastern Pennsylvania Judicial District in World War II, I acquired a respect for the efficiency and fairness of the FBI. Usually its agents were not so naive about the financial relations between the sexes during the depression—or their relations (period)—as Mr. Gersh implies.

No doubt many liberals and radicals, together with people of conservative viewpoints, find certain questions difficult to answer after the passage of many years. Short of a statement by J. Edgar Hoover to the contrary, I assure Mr. Gersh that FBI personnel are human enough to recognize that fact. And I am not, nor have I ever been, an employee of the Department of Justice.

WALTER R. STOREY

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Mr. Harry Gersh on "The Day the FBI Came to Our House" leaves me with a vague sense of dissatisfaction. . . .

Mr. Gersh's attitude towards his two FBI visitors is a faintly hostile one. He does not make clear that the interview was purely voluntary on his and his wife's part, that he could have terminated it at any point, and that the FBI may not compel him to testify. . . .

From the fact that his Mr. "Walsh" used the word "socialistic" and left with the words ". . . that's all behind you now," Mr. Gersh appears to wish us to believe that the interrogator was a fool and is typical of all FBI men in that respect. . . .

I was visited by an FBI man some time ago to check on a friend in a sensitive position in government service. For my part I could not but admire the friendly but persistent questions. And when he was through, we had quite a discussion on roses. He left with a rosebud (red!) in his buttonhole.

ABNER A. MILLER

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Judaism at Work

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Let me congratulate you on the article "Jewish Work-Camp in Indianapolis" by Irwin Stark which appeared in the January issue of COMMENTARY.

While it is true that the things Irwin Stark has said have been said many more times, it is rare, today, in these days where liberalism is on the defensive because of the "cold war" situation, to find a group who are willing to act on things they believe. And Mr. Stark has spoken of his group with sincerity—and he writes so beautifully. My whole family enjoyed the article very much. . . .

FLORENCE G. SHAPIRO

New York City

Johannisburg!

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William and Sarah Schack, the joint writers of the highly interesting article on "1,001 Nights in the Yiddish Theater," published in the November 1951 issue of your esteemed journal, say that Solomon Ettinger's *Serkele* was first printed in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1861. They express their own surprise by placing an exclamation mark at the end of their statement.

I am very sorry that I have to dampen their excitement by pointing out that Johannesburg was only founded after the discovery of gold in 1886.

How could the writers make such a mistake? The answer seems obvious:

The *Jewish Encyclopedia,* published in New York-London in 1903, says that *Serkele* was printed in Johannisburg in 1861. The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* published in New York in 1941, which, incidentally, is a mine of misinformation on South Africa, seems to have cribbed from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and added a new mistake by wrongly copying the name of the town and spelling it Johannesburg. The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* does not say that this Johannesburg is identical with the largest town in South Africa, but the writers of the above-mentioned article, who seem to have used the *Universal* as a source book, were so enthralled by the very name of Johannesburg that they established a Yiddish printing press in the "Golden City" long before the actual foundation of the town. Actually, *Serkele* was printed in 1861 in Johannisburg, a small town in Eastern Prussia, where a Hebrew printing press had been established in 1855.

H. ABT

Johannesburg, South Africa

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The State of Success

MELVILLE GOODWIN, USA. By JOHN P. MARQUAND. Little, Brown. 596 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by SAUL BELLOW

A NOVEL by John P. Marquand is a curious social formation. He is one of those writers who feel that they owe their readers a complete report on all aspects of a given subject. The reader gets his money's worth, the writer satisfies his own sense of duty, and this transaction is the bone and marrow of a book like the present one. Nothing is omitted from this history of General Melville A. Goodwin. The son of a village pharmacist, he goes to West Point, he marries, he fights in World War I, he lives on army posts, he leads combat troops in the Second World War, he is in the Army of Occupation in Germany and later in the Pentagon. The facts themselves are fascinating, but Marquand as a writer is not; he is an assembler. The various parts of his book are prepared and in each chapter the proper one is fitted into the scheme of the whole. It needs to be there; it *is* there, set in its place by workmanship and duty. It excites no happiness. Technically it is rather nice, and of course we can't help admiring good technique: at the Folies Bergères the scenes are shifted behind a transparent curtain and the stage technicians get as much applause as the naked Catherine of All the Russias when she appears with her fur collar and whip.

Clean, quiet, absolutely devoid of poetry, Marquand's novels are comfortably filled, never crowded, with characters who are occasionally capable of surprising and charming you by stepping clear of conventionality and being suddenly honest. Well, fairly honest, anyway. They are as restrained in this as the author is in the practice of his profession. They are fairly good, fairly free, or fairly wicked, fairly candid; common sense and normalcy are never far away and life though it may sometimes be disturbing is rarely violent or very dark. Even in a book about a general, nothing very unpacific happens; there is not much blood in evidence. And the color of love, though the general is in love, is extremely faint. A door closes in the Hotel Crillon and behind it the act of love is performed; at least we are instructed to think so, and for many reasons we do our best. How often do we follow a general even into the lobby of the Crillon? But if we are not admitted to the highest degree of intimacy, we are at least given a close view by Marquand of guarded, unapproachable, remote personalities, rich, powerful, or blue-blooded. They speak out, they make the gesture of confession. I believe that Marquand releases as much of the truth about them as he has at his disposal, and for this he is entitled to our gratitude. He is widely read because he does make the blue-blooded or rich speak up about themselves, and such speaking up is growing very rare. It is not to be heard in the movies, on the radio or on television, nor anywhere in public life. Tabloids have a large circulation because they make a folksy, cheating show of it.

To make even the gesture of confession is to play with dynamite. In public life, to force a man to confess is tantamount to murder. The more powerful he is, the more deadly his secrets are presumed to be, and to release these secrets is to destroy his personality. Quite literally, for when you pierce the *persona* you stab the manhood that has produced it. To compel his old comrades to confess was perhaps the most humiliating destruction that Stalin could devise. They could not retain their secrets; though the crimes they confessed were imaginary, the humiliation was real.

However, to use the emotion of confession without actually confessing is very common. And to undertake to cover the most cherished secrets while seeming to hide nothing is a challenging modern sport. Not a few writers play at it, inviting the scrutiny of a wide public, perfectly confident of their ability to conceal the essential thing. But here I am thinking of Hemingway and his general; Marquand's Mel-

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ville A. Goodwin is unacquainted with these higher complexities of psychology and politics and does try to tell something of the truth. Only he doesn't understand much himself.

ONE of the extraordinary things in *Melville Goodwin, USA* is Marquand's sensitivity to the whole matter of success. Very few writers have known how to approach it seriously. Usually they have superficially or falsely condemned the successful character, and sometimes, paradoxically, becoming successful novelists they have passed unknowingly into confusion. The problem is a tremendous one. And by the problem I do not mean the struggle for success. I am speaking of success as a state.

The narrator and sub-hero of Marquand's novel is a journalist, Sidney Skelton, who becomes a radio news commentator. This happens in a wholly accidental manner; a radio executive is struck by the quality of "sincerity" in his voice, gets him a program, and makes him rich and famous. Quite suddenly Skelton is surrounded by luxury; he owns a large country house, a chauffeur brings him to town, and above the thunder of Manhattan he sits in a leather-upholstered office and talks to the nation. Naturally, he can't feel that his success is real, and he does not enjoy it. He scoffs at his wife for her efforts to make the great house theirs; it seems to him the house of the former owners still. The servants give him uneasy feelings. He reflects ironically that his small daughter Camilla will acquire an English accent from her governess. This child, who has unfortunately about as much life as a soap-wrapper, frequently asks her daddy to tell her something about his boyhood. Obviously she senses that then he was more real. He nostalgically agrees with her that he *was* more real.

Life changes so swiftly for the successful man, the new is so overpowering, that he can only pretend to know where he is, to know what to do, how to appear, what to say, how to occupy his position. He tries to learn from others, who in turn try to learn from him. Immense, expanding American civilization lifts the ambitious man to a greater height of success than he ever saw in his adolescent dreams. It is as though those dreams were roofed with mere tissue paper, and the successful man bursts through this tissue paper, soars, amazed by what he sees, the multiplying inventions and far perspectives. For him the long centuries of struggle with scarcity have ended in a huge flood of abundance. Compared with the peasant of the famished Orient, or with the inhabitant of the Barrio Chino of Barcelona, even the American migratory worker is in a heaven of commodities. The goods pour out—machines, drugs, plastics, foods, films, services. How can they be absorbed, used, enjoyed? Or avoided, resisted? We may not survive the wrong answers to these questions.

In a recent article (in *Partisan Review*) on William Dean Howells, Lionel Trilling has discussed American materialism, dissociating it from Roman luxury and even attributing to it a certain spirituality. We must be sure that we do not mistake incapacities, which may be cowardly, or restlessness or bewilderment, for spirituality. Perhaps there is a spirituality of goods, different from the spirituality of poverty. If it exists, Mr. Trilling owes us a fuller account of it. So that we may be sure spirituality has not been gathered into the realm of creature comforts as one of the greatest of them all. Historically, comfort and spirit have not had a close association. Plutus never had a following of saints. Poverty and Plenty, according to the legend in the *Symposium*, were the parents of Eros. But he resembled his mother, Poverty, more than he did his father, and frequently slept in the street.

SUCCESSFUL, Sidney Skelton cannot possibly avoid a question that the unsuccessful man need not ask himself, namely, why he is not happy. In this question is the crisis of prosperity. Success, like suffering, is the beginning of criticism and brings men to the threshold of discovery. Mr. Skelton reaches this threshold but does not cross it. He camps in its vicinity.

Some of the blame for his lack of happiness he lays on his wife. Rather gently, he complains that she increases unreality in this great country house. Much less gentle is his feeling toward Dottie Peale, the still youthful widow of an eminent, elderly publisher. Dottie ambitiously lays snares for the general. The general is satisfactorily but not enviably married to an ambitious army wife who works powerfully for his advancement. Women thus are represented as the very demons of success, driving their men deep into the territory of unreality. However, the general is not so easily driven, for he has a mind of his own; he knows what it is he wants: Love. For it he is ready to sacrifice his high position in the Pentagon. But Dottie Peale, apparently a specialist in love, who in-

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vites it, provokes it, who so to speak wields love and threatens with it, and makes men feel their incapacity to love—this dangerous woman, when the general offers her the real thing, is frightened. The ambitious woman, like the ambitious man, cannot stand taking the ultimate objectives. The general routs her, and for Sidney Skelton that is one of his finest victories.

And why is it that the general is a real success, unshakably successful? Is it because he commands great numbers of men? Or because his vocation of blood and death makes him simple, firm, consistent, single-minded, and truthful? Mr. Marquand doesn't think much about blood and death, but he does have a sense of what it is that qualifies men for the positions they occupy. A "sincere" voice has made Skelton rich, but the general passed tests and met standards; his ascent to the very top of society was long and steady, and owing to this steadiness he feels neither strangeness nor giddiness when he arrives.

Testing, legitimacy, investiture, such things are becoming supremely important. Professional groups, universities, boards, governments are constantly revising and stiffening requirements, for, as the individuals feel less sure and less capable, the standards of groups become more formidable. The man who has passed the exam and won his rating knows where he is; he can enjoy his prerogatives and his prosperity. His mind is firm, his reality unquestionable, and he depends on no gift of sounding sincere. That is the curious message we may read in Mr. Marquand's book. It is a defense of the qualified technician. Marquand himself is a technician and knows how technique balances one, even the technique of writing. It gives him something in common with his general—craftsmen whose manhood remains intact on the battlefield or in the shadow of the RCA Building.

Anti-Zionist Ideology: Religious Style

A Partisan History of Judaism. By Elmer Berger. Devin-Adair. 140 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by Milton Himmelfarb

Fanaticism, in Santayana's definition, consists in redoubling your effort when you have for-

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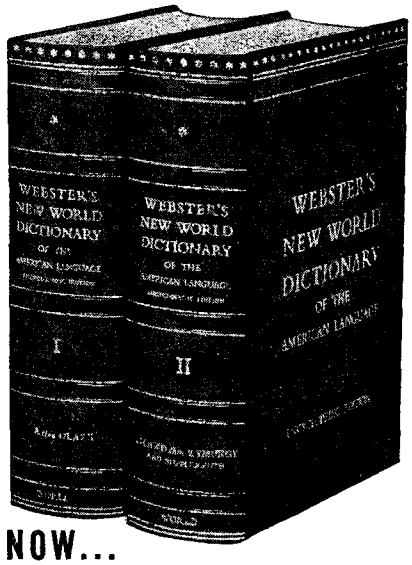

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gotten your aim. Fifteen years ago Rabbi Berger started to protest that secular Jewish nationalism (particularly Zionism) was exploiting, corrupting, and undermining Jewish religion. Setting himself to oppose that danger by preaching a return to the ideals of the ancient prophets and the leaders of 19th-century Reform, he has in the heat of battle come around to the position he announces in this book, which would empty Judaism of any content at all. The result is that he does a disservice to the very purpose that he originally sought to further.

Rabbi Berger attempts to justify his frankly partisan document by the plea that since so much Jewish writing gives undue stress to the element of particularity in the Jewish tradition, he is merely trying to restore the balance by considering only the element of universality in it. In considering a green object that some have described as yellow, are we required by truth to describe it as green, which it is, or as blue, in order to redress the balance that has been disturbed by those who call it yellow? Rabbi Berger would call it blue. What is more, he would end by believing that it *is* blue and would condemn anybody calling it green as deficient in zeal against the yellowists or as actually in covert league with them. A great Christian authority on Judaism, George Foot Moore, who surely was free of the ideological biases that Rabbi Berger detects in Jewish scholars, showed that it is false to talk of Judaism as universal *or* particular, and that the essence of Judaism is precisely its combination of the universal *and* the particular in one seamless web. To revert to our metaphor of the colors, the object is green, uniting in itself both yellow and blue.

WITH fanaticism come other qualities. One of these is a sort of contempt for the ordinary run of men, who are not privy to the great, simple, blinding Truth. If Rabbi Berger did not have this contemptuous attitude toward the unconverted reader, he could not bring himself to present the teaching of Amos in one verse: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel?" The Bible is not yet entirely a closed book, and there are still people who know another text in Amos: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." (Reinhold Niebuhr sees in the tension between these two verses the clearest possible statement of one facet of the complex relation between God and Israel; Niebuhr puts special emphasis on the "therefore" of the second verse.)

There is the loss of a sense of reality and human feeling. Thus Rabbi Berger, who might be expected to have more understanding of historical scholarship than most, can be guilty of such a ludicrous anachronism as disapproving of Deborah for hindering the assimilation of the Israelite tribes to the civilization of Canaan. In contemporary matters, he can seriously assert that the establishment of the State of Israel has served no humanitarian purpose at all.

There is a coarsening of thought, leading to an analysis of the development of social institutions in terms of what can only be called a racket interpretation of history. The autonomous medieval community, he explains, arose because "when the church-state combine emerged following the Constantine decree, those Jews who wanted power saw their golden opportunity to rise to power on the backs of other Jews." Similarly, as executive director of the American Council for Judaism he is proud to say that the Council stands for "the Judaism of the Prophets . . . without all the paraphernalia of the clerics and professionals"—the implication being that the institutions of religion are merely a clerical racket.

All these things considered, it was probably inevitable that Rabbi Berger, for a book purporting to discuss with his fellow Jews the proper development of Judaism, should solicit an introduction by a publicist and clergyman of another faith who frankly states that he knows little of Judaism. He does dislike the State of Israel, however, and he does worry about the interest of American Jews in that state. Was Rabbi Berger unable to find someone genuinely informed about Judaism who shares his point of view?

JUST as Rabbi Berger seeks to lay claim to the prophetic tradition, so he seeks to appropriate the tradition of classical Reform, especially as it is expressed in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885.

That the Reformers of the past century were deeply hostile to Jewish nationalism there can be no doubt. But there can also be no doubt that they believed in a Jewish community dedicated to religious ends and spreading God's truth in the world. The Pittsburgh Platform

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itself, after saying that "we consider ourselves no longer a nation," immediately adds, "but a religious community." It uses the even stronger word "people," as when it asserts a belief in "the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission." (The standard work on the theology of Reform, Kaufmann Kohler's *Jewish Theology Systematically and Historically Considered,* has been described as being informed by Kohler's "warm love for the Jewish people." In this the most impressive intellectual exponent of Reform is at one with the Hasidic saint Levi Isaac of Berditchev.)

The idea that the Jews constitute a people, though in a spiritual sense and for spiritual ends, would be unacceptable to Rabbi Berger. Perhaps he is right in suspecting the word, the perils of semantics being what they are today. But Rabbi Berger would not even accept the idea or the word of community. For him there are only individual Jews. A keystone of Isaac Mayer Wise's religion, to which Rabbi Berger says he would have us return, was the mission of Israel—in Biblical language, to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." He quotes the verse only to laugh at it. The Jews he knows, he says, are ordinary well-meaning people, and it would be ridiculous to think of them as a priesthood with a mission. They themselves would be embarrassed by such a thought. Presumably Isaac Mayer Wise, as he looked at the congregations he served, was also aware of the discrepancy between the actual and the ideal; that would not require unusual acumen. Wise nevertheless believed in the mission. Rabbi Berger rejects it.

Actually, it is not easy to determine what Rabbi Berger believes, in any positive sense of belief. He does say that he disapproves of "complete assimilation," defined as "leaving Judaism altogether." But it is hard to understand how anyone *can* leave Rabbi Berger's Judaism, which is like the ether that the physicists used to talk about: very rarefied, and therefore ubiquitous and clinging. Indeed, it is hard to understand why Rabbi Berger chooses to call his religion Judaism. It might just as well be Unitarianism; he urges "mounting attention to the universal, moral truths which Jeremiah and Jesus found in the intimacies of the spirit of the individual." Or it could be any one of the variety of humanist doctrines; the moral truths he talks of derive from man exclusively, and in no way from God. There is no reason to suppose that Rabbi Berger would say an atheist cannot be a Jew. Such inclusiveness is normal in nationalist thinking, whether of the Bundist or of the Zionist sort, but it is somewhat unexpected in the philosophy of a man so deeply committed to an exclusively religious criterion of Jewish identity. Once again, *les extrêmes se touchent.*

by Martin Buber

Two Types of Faith

The renowned Jewish philosopher and scholar explores the twofold meaning of faith in his most recent book. Professor Buber contrasts faith based on trust, as exemplified in Judaism, and faith based on belief, as seen in early Christianity, and pleads for a synthesis of both types to combat the pressures of the modern world.

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Rabbi Berger begins with a quotation from Job: "Would that mine adversary had written a book," wryly conceding that his nationalist opponents will welcome the opportunity of joining the issue with him. He could hardly have cooperated better with his adversaries than by writing exactly this kind of book. They will like his definition of the issues because they know that you can't beat something with nothing, and the Judaism that Rabbi Berger seeks to oppose to their nationalism is pretty close to nothing. They will especially like his insistence that to disagree with him necessarily means to agree with them. Actually, of course, both he and they distort the tradition and the relevance of Judaism. The growth of either extreme would probably not be fatal to Judaism, which has survived worse dangers, but it would be damaging.

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The Passionate Bureaucrat

THE CONFORMIST. By ALBERTO MORAVIA. Translated by ANGUS DAVIDSON. Farrar, Straus and Young. 376 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by PAOLO MILANO

IN 1937, an Italian anti-Fascist leader, Carlo Rosselli, who had carried on his struggle at home in Italy, in Paris, and finally in Spain during the Civil War, was murdered in France by French Fascists. Italians who were politically alert had a strong suspicion that the crime had been engineered by Mussolini himself, or by close henchmen. That most scrupulous of the militant historians of our time, Gaetano Salvemini, has recently shown that this suspicion was correct. Since the murder had evidently been the outcome of a complicated deal between Italian and French Fascists, with respectable bureaucrats handling the Italian end, another question arose in many minds: by what psychological process could a sedentary, educated public official become a knowing accomplice in murder? Alberto Moravia must have pondered this question deeply. Carlo Rosselli was his cousin.

The Conformist, Moravia's new novel, is the life story of a bureaucrat. It is not the story of Carlo Rosselli's death—though one of its main episodes can be construed as alluding to that event. But Rosselli's murder obviously provided the germ of the book; and the peculiar fashion in which the writer has chosen to distort the accompanying facts may explain the artistic failure of the novel as a whole.

The Conformist is grounded on two insights that might have been valuable had they been offered as suggestions rather than made the psychological formula of its hero's character. Moravia feels that "conformism" in contemporary society is no longer mere acquiescence, but an active passion. It is the protective mimicry of individuals who, suspecting that they *are* different (physiologically or otherwise), have constantly to resist the perverse or criminal temptations that haunt them. Thus the latent homosexual, or the repressed murderer, becomes the arch-conformist—the staunchest family man, the irreproachable functionary. But where gangsters rule officially, as in a fascist state, to be "normal" may also mean to be ready to commit a crime; the conformist in submitting is caught in the web of his conflicting impulses.

The conformist of Moravia's novel is Marcello Clerici, a young Roman. Having barely missed an early homosexual experience, and convinced that he is guilty of the murder of his would-be seducer, he embarks upon an "exemplary" life. (This is told in a prologue that shows Moravia the writer at his best—among adolescents.) Marcello marries an average girl, and begins a successful career in the Fascist Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He soon discovers that the "regular people" he so ardently wishes to identify himself with are neither regular nor normal. Marcello's wife has a "past," and his Fascist superiors plot murders.

He is ordered to get in touch with Edmondo Quadri, an old professor of his who is now an anti-Fascist leader working in France. Marcello goes to Paris with his wife, ostensibly on their honeymoon; there he learns that Quadri has been marked for death by the Fascist regime. Young Clerici's mission is to exploit his acquaintance with the old man whom he will keep under surveillance so that the time and place of the assassination can be arranged.

At this point, the theme, or rather the thesis, of the novel should be articulated as a credible conflict. It is not. I am at a loss to understand how an experienced novelist like Moravia could let himself crowd so many improbabilities into a single episode. Quadri is depicted as a sentimental schemer of whom it is hard to believe that he could be dangerous to any political regime, or even deceptive. And one is also left skeptical by the sudden "crush" of Quadri's Lesbian wife on Marcello's bride, and Marcello's equally abrupt passion for Mrs. Quadri.

Quadri is killed—pointlessly, since the order for his death had been revoked at the last minute. In 1943, on the very day of Mussolini's fall from power, Marcello, who has in the meantime returned to his routine life in Rome, discovers that he is at least innocent of the original crime—the murder in youth of his would-be seducer—that had shaped his adult life. He leaves Rome now to escape the political reprisals expected after the liberation; but he still can dream that his inveterate will to conform may be lastingly gratified by the coming order. However, he is killed *en route* in an air raid.

THE main characters of *The Conformist* either are in conflict with its plot, or are handled as mere parts of its mechanism. Action and characterizations are again and again at variance

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with each other. The minor figures are far more convincing than the principals; Marcello's mother, for instance, and Orlando, a police agent, are perfectly drawn.

Moravia's native talent is always apparent—his very failures, in a way, confirm it; as a writer he is not diminished by his mistakes. After reading *The Conformist,* one simply wonders whether the author of *Two Adolescents* is right in assuming that the realistic novel is his forte. I see him as a moralist with a leaning toward the psychological allegory; the "blessed *novella*" may well be his most natural medium.

Angus Davidson's translation of *The Conformist* is excellent; it deserves detailed comment rather than incidental praise.

A Zionist History

FULFILLMENT: THE EPIC STORY OF ZIONISM. By RUFUS LEARSI. World Publishing Company. 426 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT WELTSCH

MR. LEARSI'S book is well written, carefully composed, and it sums up a wide range of relevant facts, moving with intelligence and skill over a subject of immense complexity; its language is mostly moderate and restrained, and the general reader can get from it a good picture of the historical and spiritual forces which created the mystique of Zionism and the modern Zionist movement.

But, like most histories of Zionism, this book is mainly a piece of propaganda, and this harms its value as a historical work. Mr. Learsi tends to accept uncritically, sometimes even naively, the official Zionist version of history; he sees all opposition as expressing a sinister malevolence, and thus he misses the essential drama of the story, which was—and remains—most often a story, not of right against wrong, but of opposed rights.

Typical of this tendency is Mr. Learsi's treatment of British-Jewish relations. Perhaps it is still too early for anyone to tell that story objectively, but surely it cannot be understood without adequate exposition of the historical background. The pledge to permit establishment of a Jewish National Home was one of the few promises growing out of the First World War which were actually kept—in contrast, for instance, to the promise of an "Armenia for the Armenians" or the pledge of an all-Arab kingdom made to Sherif Hussein of Mecca. It should be remembered also that at the time of the 1922 White Paper a considerable part of the Tory party (usually regarded as ultra-imperialist) was clamoring for a complete British evacuation of the Middle East. About the same time, under the influence, *inter alia,* of President Wilson's philosophy of "self-determination" and Lord Luggard's theory of the "double trust," British colonial policy adopted the principle of the "paramountcy" of native interests, often against the clamors of white British settlers in Africa. In a similar way the British Colonial Office felt it impossible to ignore the wishes of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. Since Britain did not wish to abandon Zionism, it tried—in vain—to steer a middle course, and this peculiarly British indecision, this only half confused "muddling through," was Zionism's opportunity. Step by step, and in spite of opposition, the National Home could grow up. Seen in the proper perspective, it is less puzzling that the British tried to "whittle down" the Zionist program than that they nevertheless did provide the chance to establish accomplished facts. This inconsistency and tolerance, which certainly would not have characterized any other mandatory power, con-

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by MAX WEBER

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tinued even up to the final days of the Mandate, making it possible, for example, that while the British Navy watched the coast of Palestine to intercept immigrant ships, the Jewish Brigade in Europe, a part of the British Army, should be allowed to collect these immigrants from remote parts of Europe in British Army cars and trucks and deliver them to the embarkation camps.

I cannot agree with Mr. Learsi that the Yishuv was not recognized as a "national entity." The Palestine government itself provided the legal conditions for national life, from the organization of the community as a semi-autonomous body with a completely independent educational system, to the granting of large quasi-governmental powers to the Jewish Agency. The British did fear that "excessive" Jewish nationalism would result in the oppression or even expulsion of the original inhabitants of Palestine, whom the British believed it their duty to protect. Mr. Learsi makes no reference to this complex problem, which was amply dealt with in the reports of the various investigation commissions; nor does he describe the actual situation as it developed after the establishment of the Jewish state, contenting himself with a few official clichés, such as the statement that the minorities in Israel are "on a footing of civil, political, and religious equality with the Jews," or that Zionists recognize the obligation to aid in the solution of the Arab refugee problem. This is a glossing over of a very serious state of affairs that for many constitutes also a matter of conscience. The situation can be explained in terms of war, of necessity, of tragedy, but the really difficult question which no one likes to mention is how the huge Jewish immigration of the past three years, considered absolutely essential to the existence of the new state, would have been possible if the Palestinian Arabs had remained in their homeland. The statement about the equality of the minorities also calls for qualification; Israeli newspapers often discuss quite freely the government's failings in its treatment of the Arabs, and the author of a history of Zionism might be expected to pay careful attention to these sources.

On the economic problems which beset the Palestinian Yishuv and now threaten the State of Israel, Mr. Learsi offers almost no illumination. It is not sufficiently made clear, for instance, that the Yishuv was on the verge of economic collapse in 1931, and was saved only by a sudden influx of new capital, brought in mostly by German Jews. Similarly, 1938 and 1939 were years of depression, until the outbreak of war changed the situation. Mr. Learsi rightly stresses Palestine's economic importance to the Allied cause, but he fails to appreciate the other side of the picture: that the Yishuv owed its own economic salvation, and most of whatever wealth it had accumulated by the time of its struggle for independence, to the millions of pounds spent by the British Army. When one considers the economic "miracles" upon which the young state has had to rely, it becomes easier to understand the skepticism of those earlier economic experts whom Mr. Learsi dismisses as wicked: they could not anticipate these extraordinary sources of wealth, but had to base their reports on "normal" calculations. They started on the supposition that the main requirement of the National Home was to be self-supporting—a principle emphasized also by Justice Brandeis in 1921. Seen from this angle, the economic viability of the state is still a complex problem.

Some other points can only be dealt with summarily.

Nobody in Palestine believes that the "Patria," which blew up in Haifa harbor in 1940 loaded with illegal immigrants who were being taken by the British to Mauritius, was destroyed, as Mr. Learsi indicates, by its own passengers or by "refugees resolved to bring their hopeless odyssey to an end." The blowing up of the ship, in which some 250 Jews died, was a political action in a "cold war." Other incidents of that war are also rendered not quite accurately.

In quoting the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, the author mentions nothing except its recommendations for immediate admission of 100,000 Jews and the abrogation of the land laws; but there were eight other recommendations which a careful historian ought not to ignore.

Only at the end of the story, having dealt with the confusion in Palestine, does Mr. Learsi mention the Biltmore program, as if it were an event which belonged primarily to the internal history of American Zionism. But the Biltmore program was the battle cry of almost all Jewish parties in Palestine; this—among other facts—explains why all Jewish demands, including the demand for a Jewish battalion to fight Hitler, inevitably took on a purely political coloring.

In describing the illegal immigration of 1945-1948 after the liberation from Hitler, the author overstresses the humanitarian motive, as was

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usually done at the time but appears superfluous today. As a matter of fact, this immigration was largely a political action; Mr. Learsi misses an opportunity to reveal the fascinating inside story of an unmatched masterpiece of organization which stretched over the whole of anarchic post-war Europe.

Mr. Learsi seems not well informed on Zionism in Germany. The movement may have been small, but at the time in question it was certainly stronger than in any other Western country including America. It had a considerable influence on Zionist thought, and perhaps one may be allowed to say—in spite of the personal embarrassment involved for this reviewer—that its organ, the *Jüdische Rundschau,* was generally regarded as the leading and most serious Zionist publication. Franz Rosenzweig, however, was a great man and a great Jew but not a Zionist leader. And if Mr. Learsi says that "large numbers of German Jews set their faces towards Palestine not from conviction, but from compulsion," one must ask where the Jewish community is which went to Palestine from conviction only and without compulsion. Actually many German Jews chose Palestine as their refuge for Jewish reasons, since, under the impact of Nazism, German Jewry from 1933 to 1938 experienced a deep psychological self-reassertion.

There are some minor mistakes which should be corrected in any reprinting. The Twelfth Zionist Congress did not meet in Prague (p. 230) but in Karlsbad. The murdered Jewish religious leader was de Haan, not "de Hahn" as it is spelled on page 291. The Nazi murder mills started their work in 1942, not in 1940, as is stated on page 316. On page 350 there is some confusion of the figures of membership of the ZOA as compared with figures on page 305. The resolution of the Twelfth Congress regarding cooperation with the Arabs (p. 232) should be quoted in full, not only in part. And something seems to have gone awry with the bibliography, which is quite inadequate.

Summing up, I should like to repeat that this book is a useful and well-composed compendium of information necessary to anyone working within the Jewish community of our time, though, alas, it falls far short of being the history of Zionism to which we are entitled.

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Mumford's "Third Course"

THE CONDUCT OF LIFE. By LEWIS MUMFORD. Harcourt, Brace. 342 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

FOR twenty years Lewis Mumford has been engaged upon a tetralogy dealing with the human condition, of which the successive volumes have been *Technics and Civilization* (1934), *The Culture of Cities* (1938), *The Condition of Man* (1944), and now *The Conduct of Life*. Earlier still, beginning in 1922 and after eight years of magazine writing, he had brought out five books of cultural criticism, with the emphasis on architecture and literature. He interspersed the writing of the tetralogy with the publication of small books which continued his earlier themes and contained by-blows of his later ones. Thus for thirty-seven years Mumford has been addressing the public in one guise or another; and since 1924, when *Sticks and Stones* appeared, he has been rightly considered a major American critic of culture.

THIS writer first came upon Mumford in 1924 when he reviewed *Sticks and Stones*, and found him immensely sympathetic. Since then his opinion of Mumford has fluctuated from approval to impatience, reaching its lowest when Mumford attacked "Uncle Charlie" Beard for his stand on World War II, less to refute Beard's arguments than to liquidate him entirely. Even then one could not but admire Mumford's great qualities, despite, indeed, his penchant for the glittering generalization, his frequently overblown romanticism, and the numerous instances in his writings of a portentous solemnity. This excursion into Mumford's long record is made to give an appropriate backdrop to the considered declaration that *The Conduct of Life*—a title boldly borrowed from Emerson—is a book of major importance which no reader interested in the condition of man should, by an unlucky chance, miss.

While in Mumford's view "possibly three-quarters of our society is still organically healthy," the diseased quarter remaining may topple it into an abyss. Three courses, he says, are today open: (1) continuance along the present way which will bring us to extinction—a formulation I think overdrawn; let us rather say to a period of sharp, disorderly retrogression, fatal to millions; (2) an attempt at "compulsive stabilization" or fascism, a term that includes Stalinist sovietism; (3) an attempt at a dynamic integration and renewal. Mumford in this new book devotes himself to exploring his third course. He attempts by analysis and description to "recreate the values necessary for our survival and our salvation"; or, better put, he points out certain values and enunciates a way of looking at life that will assist in their vitalization. The over-arching principles he advances are a worldwide cooperation of peoples, a Point Four program, plus the Fulbright scheme and in larger dimension; a more just distribution of all the goods (philosophically defined) of life; the disciplined reduction of knowledge and energy to the service of life, ransoming life from compulsive service to them; and the elevation of the human spirit to a higher plane than has hitherto been achieved. At the center of his universe Mumford places Man; and the central purpose of his new world is the making of Men.

IN ATTEMPTING to read the meaning of human history, Mumford has come to the conclusion that man is both infinitely creative and infinitely malleable. While man may have bungled badly in building his various historical ways of life, now throwing the emphasis too far in one direction, now in another, he has always thus far shown a capacity for redressing the balance (given time) and arriving by devious ways at a higher level of excellence. There is no proof that he has yet exhausted his capacities, though copious evidence exists that he has misused them. He has never achieved perfection and it is unlikely that he ever will. It is likely, on any final accounting, that he cannot achieve perfection because he is radically imperfect by nature and, to vary Dr. Johnson's remark, imperfection is always breaking in. But even his current civilization, which Mumford assumes is basically illustrated by what obtains in the Euro-American world, is a marked advance over what has gone before. Not its qualities but its imperfections are ruining it. Its imperfections are traced to the fact that, as Emerson put it, "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Man today, as a consequence, is disoriented and demoralized. At his worst he is a mass-man and mass-men are at once legitimate objects of pity and a menace to the continued enjoyment of the three-quarters of contemporary society that is healthy. The mass-man can appear, it must not be forgotten, in any class, as my Australian friend Sir Frederick

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Eggleston recognized when he referred to "the wealthy lower orders."

What, then, is a mass-man? We know Ortega's assault on the type. Here is Mumford's:

". . . A mass man: incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities: at best patient, docile, disciplined to monotonous work to an almost pathetic degree, but increasingly irresponsible as his choices become fewer and fewer; finally a creature governed mainly by his conditioned reflexes—the ideal type desired, if never quite achieved, by the advertising agency and the sales organizations of modern business, or by the propaganda office and the planning bureaus of totalitarian and quasi-totalitarian governments."

This may not be a precise description of anybody in particular, but it certainly contains elements discoverable in all of us and in our society. If we consider the power of the forces operating to make us mass-men, our wonder is not that large numbers have succumbed to them rather completely but that any have escaped them in noticeable measure.

The problem, then, is how to get on top of this messy situation and redirect it to the advantage of everybody concerned, including those who today feel no pain. Not too long ago many of us, with a consciousness of great rectitude, would have phrased the solution exclusively in terms of institutional changes. Today we are not so sure. But I for one am sufficiently unregenerate to feel that Mumford's conspicuous weakness in *The Conduct of Life* is his steady avoidance of the question of institutional reform. I fear this will bring him altogether too many of the wrong kind of customers, the self-improvement cranks. One gets from him the feeling Thoreau got from listening to the elder Henry James: that while he is good at "subsoil plowing" he is not much at reorganizing the police force or improving the House of Correction. I suspect Mumford imagines that if sound men appear numerously, the institutions needed for their service will, so to speak, take care of themselves. Up to a point this is true, but not, I am afraid, to the point of being absolutely true. Institutions aid in the corruption of men, else Mumford's indictment of contemporary society loses much of its point.

But the root *is* man. If he can improve himself—for that is what it comes to—the whole of life is bound to be transformed. Now Mumford's emphasis is upon man's capacity to go forward, which pleases me immensely. I have rarely read a more convincing criticism of the folly of attempting to regenerate man by the recovery of some past regimen or system of belief, even when such a system contains elements of high value. This alone removes Mumford from that ever increasing category of persons who are seeking salvation by "going back to" one church or another. He is not anti-clerical and certainly not anti-religious, but he cannot see that man will find his way out by reverting to any historical answer to his problem. He must create a new answer. He may, in doing so, and probably should, raid past answers as well as present formulations for valid principles and ideals—Mumford himself does just that.

Mumford shows small sympathy, but considerable aesthetic appreciation, for Christianity as an ecclesiasticism. He has a large sympathy for the spiritual principles attributed to Jesus, but these principles are in Christianity encrusted by the conditioning to which they were subjected as they were institutionalized, and must be excavated like archeological specimens. Mumford's general view of religion is that it is a valid and invaluable variety of experience and he wants to incorporate it into the regimen of men of the future, but he himself, it seems to me, is not religious and does not look upon religious insight as necessarily the highest insight. Mumford appears to be a romantic with a decided naturalistic bias. It is indicative of his attitude that he takes considerable pains to combat the increasingly fashionable idea that a viable ethics must have a religious basis. It is the inclusiveness of Mumford's vision that marks him out from almost all other writers of his general kind. "None of the existing categories of philosophy," he writes, "none of the present procedures of science or religion, none of the popular doctrines of social action, covers the method and outlook presented here. . . . For the essence of the present philosophy is that many elements necessarily rejected by any single system are essential to develop life's highest creative potential. . . ." Abstracted from the book, this sounds both portentous and evasive. Read in context it does not, though Mumford does have a tendency to fetishize the word "life" without defining it; or perhaps to fetishize its undefinableness.

At bottom, Mumford's problem is one of values. He writes: "While the physical superstructure may still look sound, the underpin-

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nings of value and meaning have been eaten away." I think he might better have written "are being eaten away." For the values that Mumford would preserve are not entirely gone; and those he would install flourish more widely than he seems to suppose. The search for authentic values is one of the most heartening phenomena of our time. Mumford himself founds some of his optimism on this same active concern and search for values. The best of the positive values that he advocates—I cannot deal with them *seriatim* here, much as I should like to—are more widely held than he implies. It is in recommending values, however, that he incidentally goes way off the rails, when he writes: ". . . one of the prime marks of an organic change in our culture . . . would probably be the drastic reduction of the now compulsive habits of smoking and drinking; along with this would go a return, on the part of women, to a mode of wearing their hair which would forego the elaborate mechanical or chemical procedure for producing fashionable uniformity of curl. . . ." Humor is not Mumford's forte. And should not humor survive as a value in any imaginable world?

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

SAUL BELLOW, author of *Dangling Man* and *The Victim,* is now completing his third novel.

MILTON HIMMELFARB, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary College of Jewish Studies, writes on Jewish thought and history.

PAOLO MILANO is a professor of Italian at Queens College.

ROBERT WELTSCH, a lifelong Zionist and now a citizen of Israel, was editor of the *Jüdische Rundschau,* official organ of the Zionist Organization in Germany, for almost twenty years before taking up his residence in Palestine.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN, formerly a contributing editor of *Harper's,* is the author of numerous books on politics and culture.

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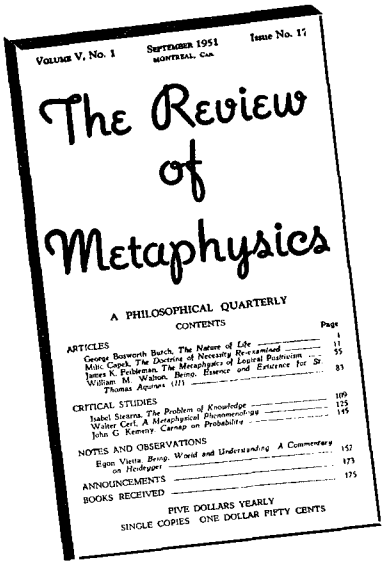
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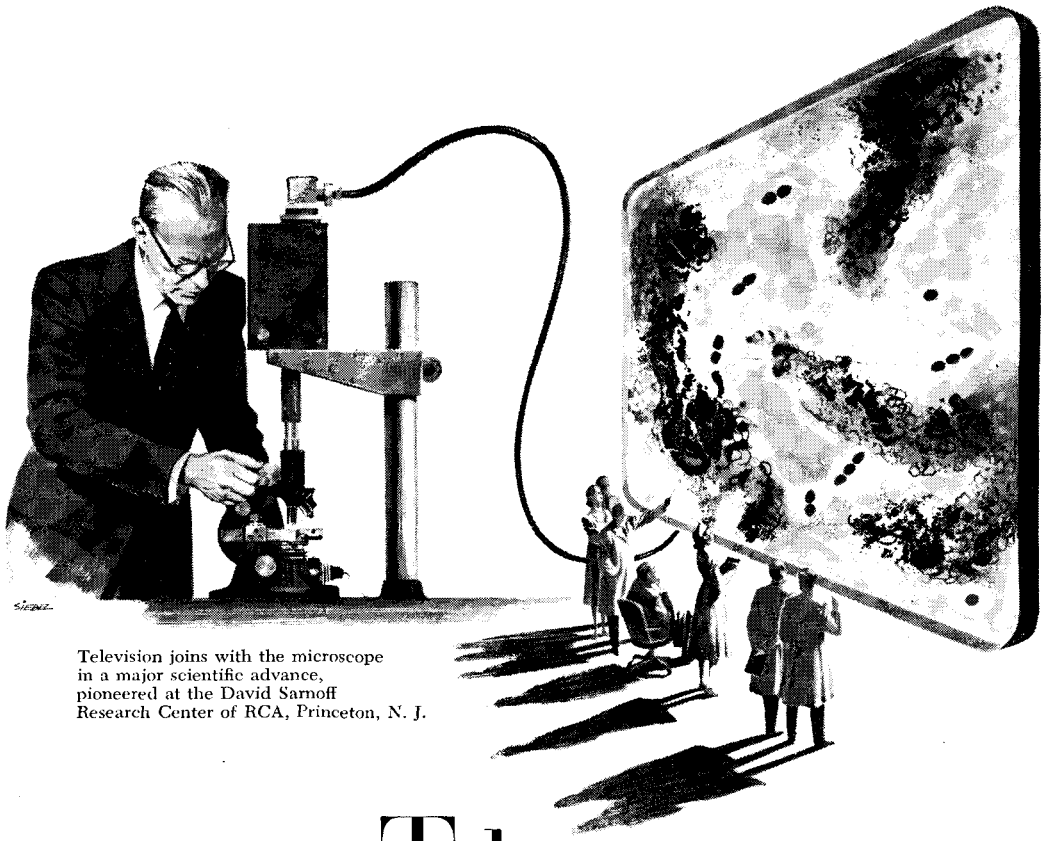

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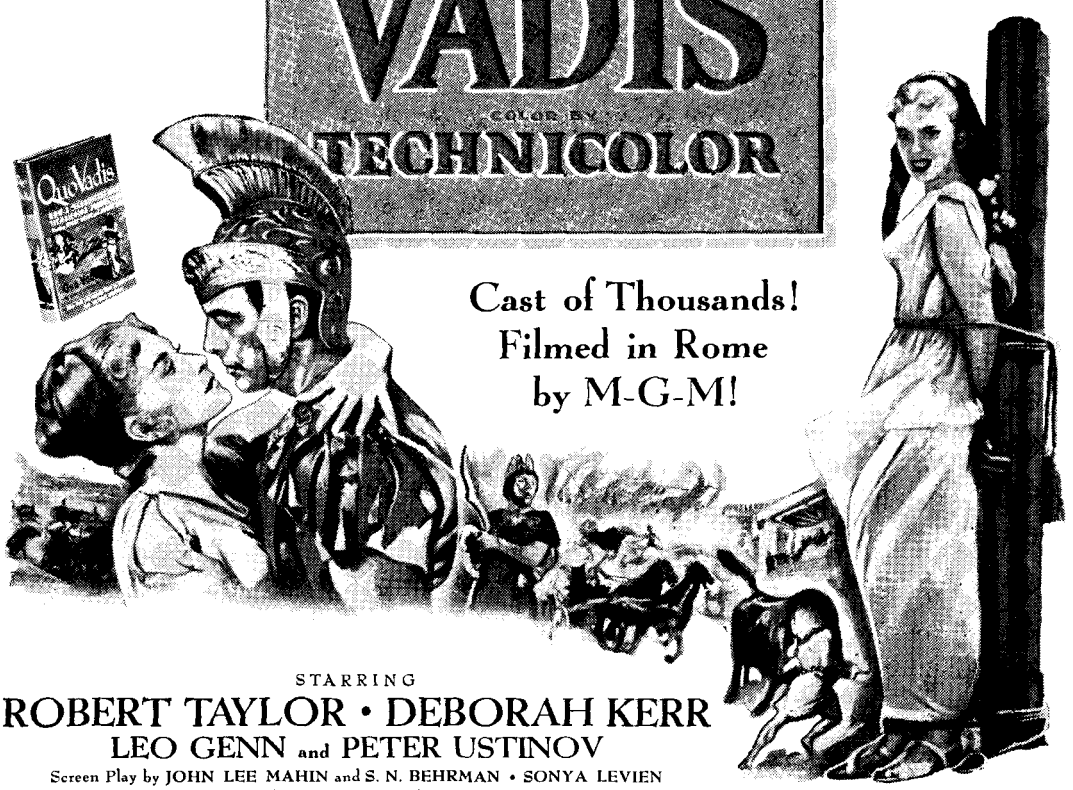

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